An Open Introduction to Anthropology at The University of Lethbridge

An Open Introduction to Anthropology at The University of Lethbridge

JAN NEWBERRY AND ALYSSA WHITE

UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE
LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA



An Open Introduction to Anthropology at The University of Lethbridge Copyright © 2026 by Alyssa White is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

Contents

Introduction 1
Alyssa White

Part I. What is Anthropology? What is Culture?

1. Introduction to Anthropology 5
2. The Culture Concept 22

Part II. Politics and Social Stratification

3. Political Anthropology 43

Part III. Fieldwork and Ethics

4. Doing Fieldwork: Methods in Cultural Anthropology 81
5. Argonauts of the Western Pacific (Prefaces and Table of Contents) 114
6. Argonauts of the Western Pacific (Introduction) 135
7. Feelings in the Field: The Emotional Labour of the Ethnographer 165
8. Ethnography at an Impasse? Fieldwork Reflections During a Pandemic 187
9. Black Anthropology 197

Part IV. Culture and Communication

10. Language 207
11. Digital Anthropology 242

Part V. Livelihood and Economy

12. Subsistence and Economics 291

Part VI. Body, Blood and Belonging

13. Kinship and Marriage 329
14. Race, Ethnicity, and Official Identity 351
15. The Biological Fallacy of Race 381
16. Gender, Sex, and Sexuality 391
17. Gender, Sex, and Sexuality (Part II) 428

Part VII. Believing, Knowing, Changing

18. Religion 491
19. Medical Anthropology 523
20. Advice from Anthropology Students 550

Part VIII. Anthropology Today: Globalization, Neoliberalism, the Anthropocene

21. Globalization and Living in the Anthropocene 553

Introduction

ALYSSA WHITE

Welcome to Anthropology 1000!

This textbook is part of an experiment to incorporate Open Educational Resource (OERs) into the Anthropology department at the University of Lethbridge. **OERs** are educational resources that are openly licensed, meaning that anyone can access and distribute them free of cost. This textbook began out of a desire to keep textbook costs low for students during the COVID-19 pandemic and has transformed into a way to reflect the fluidity of the discipline of Anthropology both globally and as it is understood and taught locally at the university. It contains a combination of openly licensed material, original work, and classic pieces that exist within the public domain, put together by the Anthropology department Chair (Jan Newberry), professors within the department (Jodie Asselin & Steve Ferzacca), and TA (Alyssa White).

Throughout this textbook, you may see **Key Takeaways** or **Anthropologist Spotlights** integrated into the textbook. These short pieces were written by previous Anthropology 1000 students, and are part of an effort to incorporate students into the ongoing co-creation of this resource. An especially heartfelt thank you to both previous students who have contributed to the creation and shaping of this text, and to students like yourself who are part of the testing of the use of this resource in-class.

This textbook is undergoing development every semester (you are the third class to have access to it!), and so there may be growing pains as it continues to grow over time. Your patience and understanding with this new project are greatly appreciated! Any questions or feedback can be directed to Alyssa, who can be reached by email (a.white@uleth.ca).

PART I

WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGY? WHAT IS CULTURE?

1. Introduction to Anthropology

"Introduction to Anthropology"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Katie Nelson (knelson@inverhills.edu) and Lara Braff (lara.braff@gcccd.edu)

WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGY?

Derived from Greek, the word *anthropos* means "human" and "logy" refers to the "study of." Quite literally, anthropology is the study of humanity. It is the study of everything and anything that makes us human.[1] From cultures, to languages, to material remains

1. Some of this chapter is adapted from the introduction to *Explorations: An Open Invitation to Biological Anthropology*: www.explorations.americananthro.org

and human evolution, anthropologists examine every dimension of humanity by asking compelling questions like: How did we come to be human and who are our ancestors? Why do people look and act so differently throughout the world? What do we all have in common? How have we changed culturally and biologically over time? What factors influence diverse human beliefs and behaviors throughout the world?

You may notice that these questions are very broad. Indeed, anthropology is an expansive field of study. It is comprised of four subfields that in the United States include cultural anthropology, archaeology, biological (or physical) anthropology, and linguistic anthropology. Together, the subfields provide a multi-faceted picture of the human condition. Applied anthropology is another area of specialization within or between the anthropological subfields. It aims to solve specific practical problems in collaboration with governmental, non-profit, and community organizations as well as businesses and corporations.

It is important to note that in other parts of the world, anthropology is structured differently. For instance, in the United Kingdom and many European countries, the subfield of cultural anthropology is referred to as social (or socio-cultural) anthropology. Archaeology, biological anthropology, and linguistic anthropology are frequently considered to be part of different disciplines. In some countries, like Mexico, anthropology tends to focus on the cultural and indigenous heritage of groups within the country rather than on comparative research. In Canada, some university anthropology departments mirror the British social anthropology model by combining sociology and anthropology. As noted above, in the United States and most commonly in Canada, anthropology is organized as a four-field discipline.

WHAT IS CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY?

The focus of this textbook is cultural anthropology, the largest of the subfields in the United States as measured by the number of people who graduate with PhDs each year.[2] Cultural anthropologists study the similarities and differences among living societies and cultural groups. Through immersive fieldwork, living and working with the people one is studying, cultural anthropologists suspend their own sense of what is "normal" in order to understand other people's perspectives. Beyond describing another way of life, anthropologists ask broader questions about humankind: Are human emotions universal or culturally specific? Does globalization make us all the same, or do people maintain cultural differences? For cultural anthropologists, no aspect of human life is outside their purview. They study art, religion, healing, natural disasters, and even pet cemeteries. While many anthropologists are at first intrigued by human diversity, they come to realize that people around the world share much in common.

Cultural anthropologists often study social groups that differ from their own, based on the view that fresh insights are generated by an outsider trying to understand the insider point of view. For example, beginning in the 1960s Jean Briggs (1929-2016) immersed herself in the life of Inuit people in the central Canadian arctic territory of Nunavut. She arrived knowing only a few words of their language, but ready to brave sub-zero temperatures to learn about this remote, rarely studied group of people. In her most famous book, *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family* (1970), she argued

2. See: https://www.americananthro.org/LearnAndTeach/ResourceDetail.aspx?ItemNumber=1499).

that anger and strong negative emotions are not expressed among families that live together in small *iglus* amid harsh environmental conditions for much of the year. In contrast to scholars who see anger as an innate emotion, Briggs' research shows that *all* human emotions develop through culturally specific child-rearing practices that foster some emotions and not others.

While cultural anthropologists traditionally conduct fieldwork in faraway places, they are increasingly turning their gaze inward to observe their own societies or subgroups within them. For instance, in the 1980s, American anthropologist Philippe Bourgois sought to understand why pockets of extreme poverty persist amid the wealth and overall high quality of life in the United States. To answer this question, he lived with Puerto Rican crack dealers in East Harlem, New York. He contextualized their experiences both historically in terms of their Puerto Rican roots and migration to the U.S. and in the present as they experienced social marginalization and institutional racism. Rather than blame the crack dealers for their poor choices or blame our society for perpetuating inequality, he argued that both individual choices and social structures can trap people in the overlapping worlds of drugs and poverty (Bourgois 2003).

THE (OTHER) SUBFIELDS OF ANTHROPOLOGY

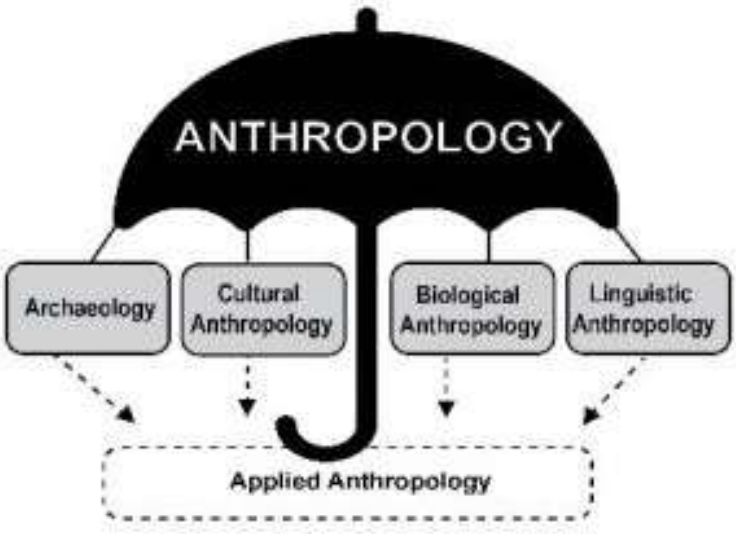


Figure 1: Anthropology and Its Subfields. Image by Katie Nelson.

Biological Anthropology

Biological anthropology is the study of human origins, evolution, and variation. Some biological anthropologists focus on our closest living relatives, monkeys and apes. They examine the biological and behavioral similarities and differences between nonhuman primates and human primates (us!). For example, Jane Goodall has devoted her life to studying wild chimpanzees (Goodall 1996). When she began her research in Tanzania in the 1960s, Goodall challenged widely held assumptions about the inherent differences between humans and apes. At the time, it was assumed that monkeys and apes lacked the social and emotional traits that made human beings such exceptional creatures. However, Goodall discovered that, like humans, chimpanzees also make tools, socialize their young, have intense emotional lives, and form strong maternal-infant bonds. Her work highlights the value of field-based research in natural settings that can help us understand the complex lives of nonhuman primates.

Other biological anthropologists focus on extinct human species, asking questions like: What did our ancestors look like? What did they eat? When did they start to speak? How did they adapt to new environments? In 2013, a team of women scientists excavated a trove of fossilized bones in the Dinaledi Chamber of the Rising Star Cave system in South Africa. The bones turned out to belong to a previously unknown **hominin** species that was later named *Homo naledi*. With over 1,550 specimens from at least fifteen individuals, the site is the largest collection of a single hominin species found in Africa (Berger, 2015). Researchers are still working to determine how the bones were left in the deep, hard to access cave and whether or not they were deliberately placed there. They also want to know what *Homo naledi* ate, if this species made and used tools, and how they are related to other *Homo* species. Biological anthropologists who study ancient human relatives are called **paleoanthropologists**. The field of paleoanthropology changes rapidly as fossil discoveries and refined dating techniques offer new clues into our past.



Figure 2: Chimpanzees are the nonhuman primate that are most closely related to humans. We shared a common ancestor with Chimpanzees around 8 million years ago.



Figure 3: Human skin color ranges from dark brown to light pink.

Other biological anthropologists focus on humans in the present including their genetic and phenotypic (observable) variation. For instance, Nina Jablonski has conducted research on human skin tone, asking why dark skin pigmentation is prevalent in

places, like Central Africa, where there is high ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunlight, while light skin pigmentation is prevalent in places, like Nordic countries, where there is low UV radiation. She explains this pattern in terms of the interplay between skin pigmentation, UV radiation, folic acid, and vitamin D. In brief, too much UV radiation can break down folic acid, which is essential to DNA and cell production. Dark skin helps block UV, thereby protecting the body's folic acid reserves in high-UV contexts. Light skin evolved as humans migrated out of Africa to low-UV contexts, where dark skin would block too much UV radiation, compromising the body's ability to absorb vitamin D from the sun. Vitamin D is essential to calcium absorption and a healthy skeleton. Jablonski's research shows that the spectrum of skin pigmentation we see today evolved to balance UV exposure with the body's need for vitamin D and folic acid (Jablonski 2012).

Anthropologist Spotlight: Dr. Jane Goodall

Avery S. & Lauryn M.

Anthropology 1000 (2022)

Dr. Valerie Jane Morris-Goodall, who is more commonly known as Dr. Jane Goodall, is an "ecologist and conservationist", who is also an ethnographer and primatologist (Appleton, 2022). Dr. Goodall was born in London, England on April 3rd, 1934. She did her research in Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania in 1960 where her main focus was primates, but more specifically chimpanzees. Dr. Goodall has now segwayed from fieldwork in Tanzania to being on the board of the Nonhuman Rights Project; as well as in April 2002, she

was named a UN Messenger of Peace, and she is currently an honorary member of the World Future Council. Dr. Jane Goodall had many large key contributions to research revolving around primates and species conservation. In 1960 Dr. Goodall first witnessed chimpanzees using tools. She saw a chimpanzee sticking "blades of stiff grass into termite holes" (Appleton, 2022) in order to extract termites to eat them. This caused her to think about redefining the term 'tool', or even to "accept chimpanzees as humans" (Appleton, 2022). Dr. Goodall was also the first person to observe that chimpanzees eat insects as well as plants, and therefore identify them as omnivores (Sarusi, 2016). Up until Dr. Goodall's discovery, they were believed to be herbivores and not eat any type of meat. In addition, Dr. Goodall also redefined the term species conservation. She believes that in order to protect healthy habitats, people must focus on not only protecting "endangered animals and their habitats", but also conserving and benefitting "the local people whose lives depend on a healthy environment" (Johnson, 2022). Dr. Goodall has written many books containing her research and relating chimpanzees to humans. *In The Shadow of Man* was originally published by Dr. Goodall in 1971, and within it she talks about her life and experiences in Tanzania and with wild chimpanzees. She also shares stories about their behaviors and talks about her study of primatology and the deep connection between chimpanzees and humans (Lai, 2022). In 2021 Dr. Goodall published *The Book of Hope*, which was co-authored by Doughty Adams. This book talks about the

reasons for hope in a dark time. In this work Dr. Goodall tells us about her childhood, experiences with poverty, land degradation and her first time encountering chimps. It also contains information on how people can live sustainably, creating a better future for the Earth. In addition, Dr. Goodall mentions the pandemic and how we should not let it blind us from the Earth's needs (Lai, 2022).

References

Appleton, S. (2022). Jane Goodall. National Geographic Society. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/jane-goodall

Goodall, J., & Lawick, H. van. (2010). In the shadow of man. Mariner Books.

Goodall, J., Abrams, D. C., & Hudson, G. (2022). *The book of hope: A survival guide for trying times*. Thorndike Press, a part of Gale, a Cengage Company.

Johnson, A. (Ed.). (2018, June 27). Healthy habitats. Jane Goodall Institute USA. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from https://www.janegoodall.org/our-work/our-approach/healthy-habitats/#:~:text=the%20Jan%20Goodall%20Institute%20believes,depend%20on%20a%20healthy%20environment.

Lai, O. (2022, January 27). 7 best books by Jane Goodall on nature and primatology. Earth.Org. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from https://earth.org/books-by-jane-goodall/

Sarusi, D. (2022, February 16). 10 things chimpanzees

eat. Jane Goodall Institute. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from https://janegoodall.ca/our-stories/10-things-chimpanzees-eat/#:~:text=Chimpanzees%20re%20omnivores%2C%20meaning%20they,smaller%20mammals%20such%20as%20monkeys.

Archaeology

Archaeologists focus on the material past: the tools, food, pottery, art, shelters, seeds, and other objects left behind by people. Prehistoric archaeologists recover and analyze these materials to reconstruct the lifeways of past societies that lacked writing. They ask specific questions like: How did people in a particular area live? What did they eat? Why did their societies to change over time? They also ask general questions about humankind: When and why did humans first develop agriculture? How did cities first develop? How did prehistoric people interact with their neighbors?



Figure 4: Archaeologists, including Kathleen Kenyon, have helped unearth the foundations of ancient dwellings at Jericho.

The method that archaeologists use to answer their questions is excavation—the careful digging and removing of dirt and stones to uncover material remains while recording their context. Archaeological research spans millions of years from human origins to the present. For example, British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon (1906-1978), was one of few female archaeologists in the 1940s. She famously studied the city structures and cemeteries of Jericho, an ancient

city dating back to the Early Bronze Age (3,200 years before the present) located in what is today the West Bank. Based on her findings, she argued that Jericho is the oldest city in the world and has been continuously occupied by different groups for over 10,000 years (Kenyon 1979).

Historical archaeologists study recent societies using material remains to complement the written record. The Garbage Project, which began in the 1970s, is an example of a historic archaeological project based in Tucson, Arizona. It involves excavating a contemporary landfill as if it were a conventional archaeology site. Archaeologists have found discrepancies between what people say they throw out and what is actually in their trash. In fact, many landfills hold large amounts of paper products and construction debris (Rathje and Murphy 1992). This finding has practical implications for creating environmentally sustainable waste disposal practices.

In 1991, while working on an office building in New York City, construction workers came across human skeletons buried just 30 feet below the city streets. Archaeologists were called in to investigate. Upon further excavation, they discovered a six-acre burial ground, containing 15,000 skeletons of free and enslaved Africans who helped build the city during the colonial era. The "African Burial Ground," which dates dating from 1630 to 1795, contains a trove of information about how free and enslaved Africans lived and died. The site is now a national monument where people can learn about the history of slavery in the U.S.[3]

3. https://www.nps.gov/afbg/index.htm

Anthropologist Spotlight: Dr. Rachel Watkins

Emma D. & Kayla B.

Anthropology 1000 (2022)

Dr. Rachel Watkins is an anthropologist and associate professor at American University in Washington, D.C., originally from Toledo, Ohio. Watkins works in the field of biocultural anthropology, a field of study exploring the relationship between human biology and culture. After getting her PhD, Watkins studied urban African American populations in the American Southeast and East Coast at Howard University for a year. Watkins was heavily influenced by William Montague Cobb and Caroline Bond Day, two other black anthropologists who paved the way for Watkins to continue her research. Both Cobb and Day studied biological determinism and the consequences of poverty and inequality on health. Watkins continues Cobb's research by studying and building on the collection of skeletons Cobb established in his work, which contains over 600 skeletons of African Americans who died in D.C. between 1930 and 1969. Watkins is passionate about giving people of colour encouragement to enter the field of anthropology, as they were used as research projects for many years by powerful white anthropologists. Getting more people of the minority into the field is a passion of Watkins'.

Some of her notable work includes "Variation in health and socioeconomic status within the W. Montague Cobb skeletal collection: Degenerative joint disease, trauma and cause of death", in which she

examines the health differences between two samples in the African American skeletal collection who were of different socioeconomic status. Another works of hers is "Repositioning the Cobb human archive: The merger of a skeletal collection and its texts", which merges the skeletons in the collection and the texts associated with them to address the loss of skeletons over time, and this merger allows for the representation of the entirety of the collection, even with the loss of individual skeletons. Watkins' research is important to the field because she details in her articles through her work with Cobb's collection how socioeconomic status of African Americans impacted their health and lifespan. She advocates for minorities to enter the field, and she brings her knowledge and research to public discussions. She speaks at elementary, middle, and high schools to inspire kids to follow in her footsteps and delve into the history of anthropology.

Works Cited

Watkins, Rachel. "Repositioning the Cobb human archive: The merger of a skeletal collection and its texts." *American Journal of Human Biology*, vol. 27, issue 1, November 2014, pp. 41-50. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajhb.22650

Watkins, Rachel. "Variation in health and socioeconomic status within the W. Montague Cobb skeletal collection: Degenerative joint disease, trauma and cause of death." *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, vol. 22, 2012, 22-44.

https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Variation-in-health-and-socioeconomic-status-within-Watkins/40cce9fb8866c228af32348fa470ffd95275114d

Arnette, R. "Piecing Together the Past." *Science*. Accessed November 17, 2022. https://www.science.org/content/article/piecing-together-past

Watkins, R. "Rachel Watkins." *American University*. Accessed November 17, 2022. https://www.american.edu/cas/faculty/watkins.cfm

Linguistic Anthropology

Language is a defining trait of human beings. While other animals have communication systems, only humans have complex, symbolic languages—over 6,000 of them! Human language makes it possible to teach and learn, to plan and think abstractly, to coordinate our efforts, and even to contemplate our own demise. Linguistic anthropologists ask questions like: How did language first emerge? How has it evolved and diversified over time? How has language helped us succeed as a species? How can language convey one's social identity? How does language influence our views of the world? If you speak two or more languages, you may have experienced how language affects you. For example, in English, we say: "I love you." But Spanish speakers use different terms—*te amo*, *te adoro*, *te quiero*, and so on—to convey different kinds of love: romantic love, platonic love, maternal love, etc. The Spanish language arguably expresses more nuanced views of love than the English language.

One intriguing line of linguistic anthropological research focuses on the relationship between language, thought, and culture. It may seem intuitive that our thoughts come first; after all, we like to say: "Think before you speak." However, according to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (also known as linguistic relativity), the language you speak allows you to think about some things and not others. When Benjamin Whorf (1897–1941) studied the Hopi language, he found not just word-level differences, but *grammatical* differences between Hopi and English. He wrote that Hopi has no grammatical tenses to convey the passage of time. Rather, the Hopi language indicates whether or not something has "manifested." Whorf argued that English grammatical tenses (past, present, future) inspire a linear sense of time, while Hopi language, with its lack of tenses, inspires a cyclical experience of time (Whorf 1956). Some critics, like German-American linguist Ekkehart Malotki, refute Whorf's theory, arguing that Hopi do have linguistic terms for time and that a linear sense of time is natural and perhaps universal. At the same time, Malotki recognized that English and Hopi tenses differ, albeit in ways less pronounced than Whorf proposed (Malotki 1983).



Figure 5: From the moment they are born, children learn through language and nonverbal forms of communication.

Other linguistic anthropologists track the emergence and diversification of languages, while others focus on language use in today's social contexts. Still others explore how language is crucial to socialization: children learn their culture and social identity through language and nonverbal forms of communication (Ochs and Schieffelin 2012).

Applied Anthropology

Sometimes considered a fifth subdiscipline, applied anthropology involves the application of anthropological theories, methods, and findings to solve practical problems. Applied anthropologists are employed outside of academic settings, in both the public and private sectors, including business or consulting firms, advertising companies, city government, law enforcement, the medical field, nongovernmental organizations, and even the military.

Applied anthropologists span the subfields. An applied archaeologist might work in cultural resource management to assess a potentially significant archaeological site unearthed during a construction project. An applied cultural anthropologist could work at a technology company that seeks to understand the human-technology interface in order to design better tools.

Medical anthropology is an example of both an applied and theoretical area of study that draws on all four subdisciplines to understand the interrelationship of health, illness, and culture. Rather than assume that disease resides only within the individual body, medical anthropologists explore the environmental, social, and cultural conditions that impact the *experience* of illness. For example, in some cultures, people believe illness is caused by an imbalance within the community. Therefore, a communal response, such as a healing ceremony, is necessary to restore both the health of the person *and* the group. This approach differs from the one used in mainstream U.S. healthcare, whereby people go to a doctor to find the biological cause of an illness and then take medicine to restore the individual body.



Figure 6: Paul Farmer in Haiti.

Trained as both a physician and medical anthropologist, Paul Farmer demonstrates the applied potential of anthropology. During his college years in North Carolina, Farmer's interest in the Haitian migrants working on nearby farms inspired him to visit Haiti. There, he was struck by the poor living conditions and lack of health care facilities. Later, as a physician, he would return to Haiti to treat individuals suffering from diseases like tuberculosis and cholera that were rarely seen in the United States. As an anthropologist, he would contextualize the experiences of his Haitian patients in relation to the historical, social, and political forces that impact Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (Farmer 2006). Today, he not only writes academic books about human suffering, he also takes action. Through the work of Partners in Health, a nonprofit organization that he co-founded, he has helped open health clinics in many resource-poor countries and trained local staff to administer care. In this way, he applies his medical *and* anthropological training to improve people's lives.

2. The Culture Concept

"The Culture Concept"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Priscilla Mederios (priscilla.mederios@wchopsital.ca) and Emily Cowall (cowallee@mcmaster.ca)

STORIES AS A REFLECTION ON CULTURE

Stories are told in every culture and often teach a moral lesson to young children. Fables are similar, but often set an example for people to live by or describe what to do when in a dangerous situation. They can also be a part of traditions, help to preserve ways of life, or explain mysteries. Storytelling takes many different forms such as tall tales and folktales. These are for entertainment or to discuss problems encountered in life. Both are also a form of cultural preservation, a way to communicate morals or values to the next generation. Stories can also be a form of social control over certain activities or customs that are not allowed in a society.

A fable becomes a tradition by being retold and accepted by

others in the community. Different cultures have very similar stories sharing common themes. One of the most common themes is the battle between good and evil. Another is the story of the quest. The quest often takes the character to distant lands, filled with real-life situations, opportunities, hardships, and heartaches. In both of these types of stories, the reader is introduced to the anthropological concept known as *the Other*. What exactly is *the Other*? The Other is a term that has been used to describe people whose customs, beliefs, or behaviors are "different" from one's own.



Travel writer Lemuel Gulliver is captured and tied down by the Lilliputians.

Can a story explain the concept of the Other? Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is about four different voyages that Gulliver undertakes. His first adventure is the most well-known; in the story, Lemuel Gulliver is a surgeon who plans a sea voyage when his business fails. During a storm at sea, he is shipwrecked, and he awakens to find himself bound and secured by a group of captors—the Lilliputians—who are six inches tall. Gulliver, having

what Europeans consider a normal body height, suddenly becomes a giant. During this adventure, Gulliver is seen as an outsider, a stranger with different features and language. Gulliver becomes the Other.

What lessons about culture can we learn from *Gulliver's Travels*? Swift's story offers lessons about cultural differences, conflicts occurring in human society, and the balance of power. It also provides an important example of the Other. The Other is a matter of perspective in this story: Gulliver thinks the Lilliputians are strange and unusual. To Gulliver, the Lilliputians are the Other, but the Lilliputians equally see Gulliver as the Other—he is their captive and is a rare species of man because of his size.

The themes in *Gulliver's Travels* describe different cultures and aspects of storytelling. The story uses language, customary behaviors, and the conflict between different groups to explore ideas of the exotic and strange. The story is framed as an adventure, but is really about how similar cultures can be. In the end, Gulliver becomes a member of another cultural group, learning new norms, attitudes, and behaviors. At the same time, he wants to colonize them, a reflection of his former cultural self.

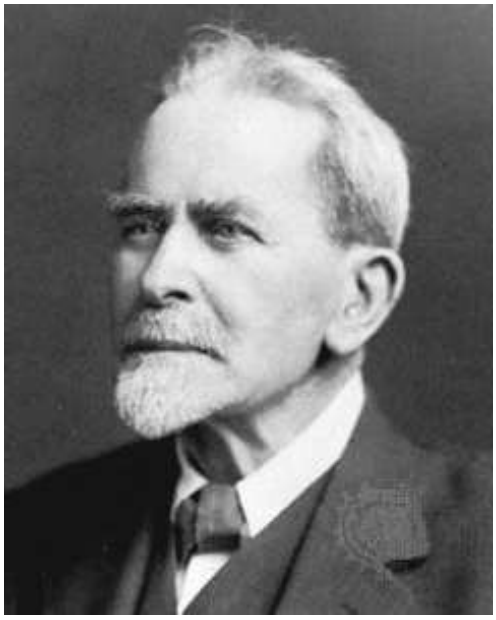
Stories are an important part of culture, and when used to pass on traditions or cultural values, they can connect people to the past. Stories are also a way to validate religious, social, political, and economic practices from one generation to another. Stories are important because they are used in some societies to apply social pressure, to keep people in line, and are part of shaping the way that people think and behave.

Anthropologists as Storytellers

People throughout recorded history have relied on storytelling as a way to share cultural details. When early anthropologists studied people from other civilizations, they relied on the written accounts

and opinions of others; they presented facts and developed their "stories," about other cultures based solely on information gathered by others. These scholars did not have any direct contact with the people they were studying. This approach has come to be known as armchair anthropology. Simply put, if a culture is viewed from a distance (as from an armchair), the anthropologist tends to measure that culture from his or her own vantage point and to draw comparisons that place the anthropologist's culture as superior to the one being studied. This point of view is also called ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is an attitude based on the idea that one's own group or culture is better than any other.

Early anthropological studies often presented a biased ethnocentric interpretation of the human condition. For example, ideas about racial superiority emerged as a result of studying the cultures that were encountered during the colonial era. During the colonial era from the sixteenth century to the mid–twentieth century, European countries (Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Dutch Republic, Spain, Portugal) asserted control over land (Asia, Africa, the Americas) and people. European ideas of wrong and right were used as a measuring stick to judge the way that people in different cultures lived. These other cultures were considered primitive, which was an ethnocentric term for people who were non-European. It is also a negative term suggesting that indigenous cultures had a lack of technological advancement. Colonizers thought that they were superior to the Other in every way.



Sir James Frazer is among the founders of modern anthropology.

Armchair anthropologists were unlikely to be aware of their ethnocentric ideas because they did not visit the cultures they studied. Scottish social anthropologist Sir James Frazer is well-known for his 1890 work *The Golden Bough: A Study of Comparative Religions*. Its title was later changed to *A Study in Magic and Religion*, and it was one of the first books to describe and record magical and religious beliefs of different culture groups around the world. Yet, this book was not the outcome of extensive study in the field. Instead, Frazer relied on the accounts of others who had traveled, such as scholars, missionaries, and government officials, to formulate his study.

Another example of anthropological writing without the use of fieldwork is Sir E. B. Tylor's 1871 work *Primitive Culture*. Tylor, who went on to become the first professor of anthropology at Oxford University in 1896, was an important influence in the development of sociocultural anthropology as a separate discipline. Tylor defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."[1] His definition of culture is still used frequently today and remains the foundation to the culture concept in anthropology.

1. [2]
2. [1]

Tylor's definition of culture was influenced by the popular theories and philosophies of his time, including the work of Charles Darwin. Darwin formulated the theory of evolution by natural selection in his 1859 book *On the Origin of Species*. Scholars of the time period, including Tylor, believed that cultures were subject to evolution just like plants and animals and thought that cultures developed over time from simple to complex. Many nineteenth century anthropologists believed that cultures evolved through distinct stages. They labeled these stages with terms such as savagery, barbarism, and civilization.[3] These theories of cultural evolutionism would later be successfully refuted, but conflicting views about cultural evolutionism in the nineteenth century highlight an ongoing nature versus nurture debate about whether biology shapes behavior more than culture.



Drawing of a Mother and Child in Malaysia From Anthropology: An Introduction to the Study of Man and Civilization, E.B. Tylor, 1904

Both Frazer and Tylor contributed important and foundational studies even though they never went into the field to gather their information. Armchair anthropologists were important in the development of anthropology as a discipline in the late nineteenth century because although these early scholars were not directly experiencing the cultures they were studying, their work did ask important questions—questions that could ultimately only be answered by going into the field.

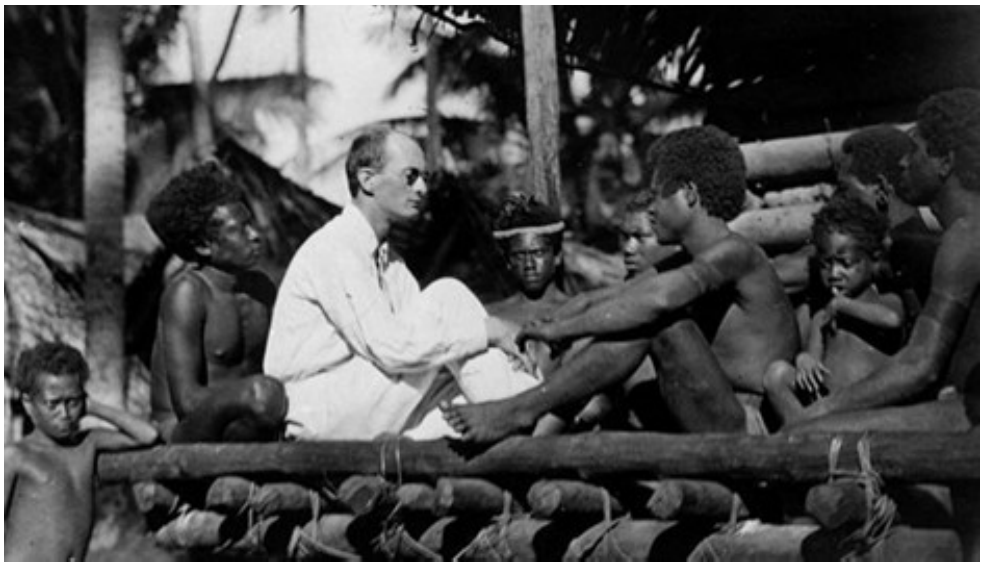
3. [4]

4. [2]

Anthropologists as Cultural Participants

The armchair approach as a way to study culture changed when scholars such as Bronislaw Malinowski, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, Franz Boas, and Margaret Mead took to the field and studied by being participants and observers. As they did, fieldwork became the most important tool anthropologists used to understand the "complex whole" of culture.

Bronislaw Malinowski, a Polish anthropologist, was greatly influenced by the work of Frazer. However, unlike the armchair anthropology approach Frazer used in writing *The Golden Bough*, Malinowski used more innovative ethnographic techniques, and his fieldwork took him off the veranda to study different cultures. The off the veranda approach is different from armchair anthropology because it includes active participant observation: traveling to a location, living among people, and observing their day-to-day lives.



Bronislaw Malinowski in the Trobriand Islands, 1915–1918

What happened when Malinowski came off the veranda? *The*

Argonauts of the Western Pacific (1922) was considered the first modern ethnography and redefined the approach to fieldwork. This book is part of Malinowski's trilogy on the Trobriand Islanders. Malinowski lived with them and observed life in their villages. By living among the islanders, Malinowski was able to learn about their social life, food and shelter, sexual behaviors, community economics, patterns of kinship and family.[5]

During his fieldwork with the Trobriand Islanders, Malinowski worked to integrate himself into their cultural group. Anthropologists coming off the veranda began to became personally involved with the locals during the course of their fieldwork: taking leadership positions and assuming key roles in society; entering into a marriage or spousal contract; exploring sexuality or fully participating in rituals. In *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Malinowski suggested that other anthropologists should "grasp the native's point of view, his relations to life, to realize his vision of his world."[7] However, as we will see later in this chapter, Malinowski's practice of integration presented problems from an ethical point of view. Participant-observation is a method to gather ethnographic data, but the building of personal relationships required by this method places both the anthropologist and the culture group at risk by blurring the lines on both sides of the relationship.

5. [6]
6. [3]
7. [8]
8. [4]

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEORIES OF CULTURE

Anthropology in Europe

The discipline of cultural anthropology developed somewhat differently in Europe and North America, in particular in the United States, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with each region contributing new dimensions to the concept of culture. Many European anthropologists were particularly interested in questions about how societies were structured and how they remained stable over time. This highlighted emerging recognition that culture and society are not the same. Culture had been defined by Tylor as knowledge, beliefs, and customs, but a society is more than just shared ideas or habits. In every society, people are linked to one another through social institutions such as families, political organizations, and businesses. Anthropologists across Europe often focused their research on understanding the form and function of these social institutions.

European anthropologists developed theories of functionalism to explain how social institutions contribute to the organization of society and the maintenance of social order. Bronislaw Malinowski believed that cultural traditions were developed as a response to specific human needs such as food, comfort, safety, knowledge, reproduction, and economic livelihood. One function of educational institutions like schools, for instance, is to provide knowledge that prepares people to obtain jobs and make contributions to society. Although he preferred the term structural-functionalism, the British anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe-Brown was also interested in the way that social structures functioned to maintain social stability

in a society over time.[9] He suggested that in many societies it was the family that served as the most important social structure because family relationships determined much about an individual's social, political, and economic relationships and these patterns were repeated from one generation to the next. In a family unit in which the father is the breadwinner and the mother stays home to raise the children, the social and economic roles of both the husband and the wife will be largely defined by their specific responsibilities within the family. If their children grow up to follow the same arrangement, these social roles will be continued in the next generation.

In the twentieth century, functionalist approaches also became popular in North American anthropology, but eventually fell out of favor. One of the biggest critiques of functionalism is that it views cultures as stable and orderly and ignores or cannot explain social change. Functionalism also struggles to explain why a society develops one particular kind of social institution instead of another. Functionalist perspectives did contribute to the development of more sophisticated concepts of culture by establishing the importance of social institutions in holding societies together. While defining the division between what is cultural and what is social continues to be complex, functionalist theory helped to develop the concept of culture by demonstrating that culture is not just set of ideas or beliefs, but consists of specific practices and social institutions that give structure to daily life and allow human communities to function.

9. [10]

10. [5]

Anthropology in the United States

During the development of anthropology in North America (Canada, United States, and Mexico), the significant contribution made by the American School of Anthropology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the concept of cultural relativism, which is the idea that cultures cannot be objectively understood since all humans see the world through the lens of their own culture. Cultural relativism is different than ethnocentrism because it emphasizes understanding culture from an insider's view. The focus on culture, along with the idea of cultural relativism, distinguished cultural anthropology in the United States from social anthropology in Europe.

The participant-observation method of fieldwork was a revolutionary change to the practice of anthropology, but at the same time it presented problems that needed to be overcome. The challenge was to move away from ethnocentrism, race stereotypes, and colonial attitudes, and to move forward by encouraging anthropologists to maintain high ethical standards and open minds.



Franz Boas, One of the Founders of American Anthropology, 1915

Franz Boas, an American anthropologist, is acknowledged for redirecting American anthropologists away from cultural evolutionism and toward cultural relativism. Boas first studied physical science at the University of Kiel in Germany. Because he was a trained scientist, he was familiar with using empirical methods as a way to study a subject. Empirical methods are

based on evidence that can be tested using observation and experiment.

In 1883, Franz Boas went on a geographical expedition to Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic. *The Central Eskimo* (1888) details his time spent on Baffin Island studying the culture and language of the central Inuit people. He studied every aspect of their culture such as tools, clothing, and shelters. This study was Boas' first major contribution to the American school of anthropology and convinced him that cultures could only be understood through extensive field research. As he observed on Baffin Island, cultural ideas and practices are shaped through interactions with the natural environment. The cultural traditions of the Inuit were suited for the environment in which they lived. This work led him to promote cultural relativism: the principle that a culture must be understood on its own terms rather than compared to an outsider's standard. This was an important turning point in correcting the challenge of ethnocentrism in ethnographic fieldwork.[11]

Boas is often considered the originator of American anthropology because he trained the first generation of American anthropologists including Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Alfred Kroeber. Using a commitment to cultural relativism as a starting point, these students continued to refine the concept of culture. Ruth Benedict, one of Boas' first female students, used cultural relativism as a starting point for investigating the cultures of the American northwest and southwest. Her best-selling book *Patterns of Culture* (1934) emphasized that culture gives people coherent patterns for thinking and behaving. She argued that culture affects individuals psychologically, shaping individual personality traits and leading the members of a culture to exhibit similar traits such as tendency toward aggression, or calmness.

11. [12]

12. [6]

Benedict was a professor at Columbia University and in turn greatly influenced her student Margaret Mead, who went on to become one of the most well-known female American cultural anthropologists. Mead was a pioneer in conducting ethnographic research at a time when the discipline was predominately male. Her 1925 research on adolescent girls on the island of Taʻū in the Samoan Islands, published as *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), revealed that teenagers in Samoa did not experience the same stress and emotional difficulties as those in the United States. The book was an important contribution to the nature versus nurture debate, providing an argument that learned cultural roles were more important than biology. The book also reinforced the idea that individual emotions and personality traits are products of culture.



Ruth Benedict, 1936

Alfred Louis Kroeber, another student of Boas, also shared the commitment to field research and cultural relativism, but Kroeber was particularly interested in how cultures change over time and influence one another. Through publications like *The Nature of Culture* (1952), Kroeber examined the historical processes that led cultures to emerge as distinct configurations as well as the way cultures could become more similar through the spread or diffusion of cultural traits. Kroeber was also interested in language and the role it plays in transmitting culture. He devoted much of his career to studying Native American languages in an attempt to document these languages before they disappeared.

Anthropologists in the United States have used cultural relativism to add depth to the concept of culture in several ways. Tylor had

defined culture as including knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, capabilities and habits. Boas and his students added to this definition by emphasizing the importance of enculturation, the process of learning culture, in the lives of individuals. Benedict, Mead, and others established that through enculturation culture shapes individual identity, self-awareness, and emotions in fundamental ways. They also emphasized the need for holism, approaches to research that considered the entire context of a society including its history.

Kroeber and others also established the importance of language as an element of culture and documented the ways in which language was used to communicate complex ideas. By the late twentieth century, new approaches to symbolic anthropology put language at the center of analysis. Later on, Clifford Geertz, the founding member of postmodernist anthropology, noted in his book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) that culture should not be seen as something that was "locked inside people's heads." Instead, culture was publicly communicated through speech and other behaviors. Culture, he concluded, is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life."[13] This definition, which continues to be influential today, reflects the influence of many earlier efforts to refine the concept of culture in American anthropology.

Ethical Issues in Truth Telling

As anthropologists developed more sophisticated concepts of

13. [14]
14. [7]

culture, they also gained a greater understanding of the ethical challenges associated with anthropological research. Because participant-observation fieldwork brings anthropologists into close relationships with the people they study, many complicated issues can arise. Cultural relativism is a perspective that encourages anthropologists to show respect to members of other cultures, but it was not until after World War II that the profession of anthropology recognized a need to develop formal standards of professional conduct.

The Nuremberg trials, which began in 1945 in Nuremberg, Germany and were conducted under the direction of the France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States, prosecuted members of the Nazi regime for war crimes. In addition to military and political figures, physicians and scientists were also prosecuted for unethical human experimentation and mass murder. The trials demonstrated that physicians and other scientists could be dangerous if they used their skills for abusive or exploitative goals. The Nuremberg Code that emerged from the trials is considered a landmark document in medical and research ethics. It established principles for the ethical treatment of the human subjects involved in any medical or scientific research.

Many universities adopted principles from the Nuremberg Code to write ethical guidelines for the treatment of human subjects. Anthropologists and students who work in universities where these guidelines exist are obliged to follow these rules. The American Anthropological Association (AAA), along with many anthropology organizations in other countries, developed codes of ethics describing specific expectations for anthropologists engaged in research in a variety of settings. The principles in the AAA code of ethics include: do no harm; be open and honest regarding your work; obtain informed consent and necessary permissions; ensure the vulnerable populations in every study are protected from competing ethical obligations; make your results accessible; protect and preserve your records; and maintain respectful and ethical

professional relationships. These principles sound simple, but can be complicated in practice.

Bronislaw Malinowski

The career of Bronislaw Malinowski provides an example of how investigations of culture can lead anthropologists into difficult ethical areas. As discussed above, Malinowski is widely regarded as a leading figure in the history of anthropology. He initiated the practice of participant-observation fieldwork and published several highly regarded books including *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Following his death, the private diary he kept while conducting fieldwork was discovered and published as *A Diary in the Strictest Sense of the Term* (1967). The diary described Malinowski's feelings of loneliness and isolation, but also included a great deal of information about his sexual fantasies as well his some insensitive and contemptuous opinions about the Trobriand Islanders. The diary provided valuable insight into the mind of an important ethnographer, but also raised questions about the extent to which his personal feelings, including bias and racism, were reflected in his official conclusions.

Most anthropologists keep diaries or daily notes as a means of keeping track of the research project, but these records are almost never made public. Because Malinowski's diary was published after his death, he could not explain why he wrote what he did, or assess the extent to which he was able to separate the personal from the professional. Which of these books best reflects the truth about Malinowski's interaction with the Trobriand Islanders? This rare insight into the private life of a field researcher demonstrates that even when anthropologists are acting within the boundaries of professional ethics, they still struggle to set aside their own ethnocentric attitudes and prejudices.

Napoleon Chagnon



Yanomami Woman and Child, 1997

A more serious and complicated incident concerned research conducted among the Yanomami, an indigenous group living in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil and Venezuela. Starting in the 1960s, the anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon and James Neel, a geneticist, carried out research among the Yanomami. Neel was interested in studying the effects of radiation released by nuclear explosions on people living in remote areas. Chagnon was investigating theories about the role of violence in Yanomami society. In 2000, an American journalist, Patrick Tierney, published a book about Chagnon and Neel's research: *Darkness in El Dorado: How Scientists and Journalists Devastated the Amazon*. The book contained numerous stunning allegations, including a claim that the pair had deliberately infected the Yanomami with measles, starting an epidemic that killed thousands of people. The book also claimed that Neel had conducted medical experiments without the consent of the Yanomami and that Chagnon had deliberately created conflicts between Yanomami groups so he could study the resulting violence.

These allegations were brought to the attention of the American Anthropological Association, and a number of inquiries were eventually conducted. James Neel was deceased, but Napoleon Chagnon steadfastly denied the allegations. In 2002, the AAA issued their report; Chagnon was judged to have misrepresented the violent nature of Yanomami culture in ways that caused them harm and to have failed to obtain proper consent for his research. However, Chagnon continued to reject these conclusions and

complained that the process used to evaluate the evidence was unfair. In 2005, the AAA rescinded its own conclusion, citing problems with the investigation process. The results of several years of inquiry into the situation satisfied few people. Chagnon was not definitively pronounced guilty, nor was he exonerated. Years later, debate over this episode continues.[15] The controversy demonstrates the extent to which truth can be elusive in anthropological inquiry. Although anthropologists should not be storytellers in the sense that they deliberately create fictions, differences in perspective and theoretical orientation create unavoidable differences in the way anthropologists interpret the same situation. Anthropologists must try to use their toolkit of theory and methods to ensure that the stories they tell are truthful and represent the voice of the people being studied using an ethical approach.

Our Final Reflection

Clearly, the culture concept does not follow a straight line. Scholars, storytellers, and the people one meets in everyday life have something to say about the components of culture. The story that emerges from different voices brings insight into what it is to be human. Defining the culture concept is like putting together a puzzle with many pieces. The puzzle of culture concepts is almost complete, but it is not finished…yet.

15. [16]
16. [8]

PART II

POLITICS AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

3. Political Anthropology

"Political Anthropology: A Cross-Cultural Comparison"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Paul McDowell (paulanthropus@cox.net)

All cultures have one element in common: they somehow exercise social control over their own members. Even small foraging societies such as the Ju/'hoansi or !Kung, the Inuit (or "Eskimo") of the Arctic north, and aboriginal Australians experience disputes that must be contained if inter-personal conflicts are to be reduced or eliminated. As societies become more complex, means of control increase accordingly. The study of these means of control are the subject of political anthropology.

BASIC CONCEPTS IN POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Like the "invisible hand" of the market to which Adam Smith refers in analyzing the workings of capitalism, two forces govern

the workings of politics: power—the ability to induce behavior of others in specified ways by means of coercion or use or threat of physical force—and authority—the ability to induce behavior of others by persuasion.[1] Extreme examples of the exercise of power are the gulags (prison camps) in Stalinist Russia, the death camps in Nazi-ruled Germany and Eastern Europe, and so-called Supermax prisons such as Pelican Bay in California and the prison for "enemy combatants" in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, by the United States. In all of these settings, prisoners comply or are punished or executed. At the other extreme are most forager societies, which typically exercise authority more often than power. Groups in those societies comply with the wishes of their most persuasive members.

In actuality, power and authority are points on a continuum and both are present in every society to some degree. Even Hitler, who exercised absolute power in many ways, had to hold the Nuremberg rallies to generate popular support for his regime and persuade the German population that his leadership was the way to national salvation. In the Soviet Union, leaders had a great deal of coercive and physical power but still felt the need to hold parades and mass rallies on May Day every year to persuade people to remain attached to their vision of a communal society. At the other end of the political spectrum, societies that tend to use persuasion through authority also have some forms of coercive power. Among the Inuit, for example, individuals who flagrantly violated group norms could be punished, including by homicide.[2]

1. Morton Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

2. E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Law of Primitive Man* (New York: Atheneum, 1968 [1954]). For a critique of Hoebel see John

A related concept in both politics and law is legitimacy: the perception that an individual has a valid right to leadership. Legitimacy is particularly applicable to complex societies that require centralized decision-making. Historically, the right to rule has been based on various principles. In agricultural states such as ancient Mesopotamia, the Aztec, and the Inca, justification for the rule of particular individuals was based on hereditary succession and typically granted to the eldest son of the ruler. Even this principle could be uncertain at times, as was the case when the Inca emperor Atahualpa had just defeated his rival and brother Huascar when the Spaniards arrived in Peru in 1533.[3]

In many cases, supernatural beliefs were invoked to establish legitimacy and justify rule by an elite. Incan emperors derived their right to rule from the Sun God and Aztec rulers from Huitzilopochtli (Hummingbird-to-the-Left). European monarchs invoked a divine right to rule that was reinforced by the Church of England in Britain and by the Roman Catholic Church in other countries prior to the Reformation. In India, the dominance of the Brahmin elite over the other castes is justified by karma, cumulative forces created by good and evil deeds in past lives. Secular equivalents also serve to justify rule by elites; examples include the promise of a worker's paradise in the former Soviet Union and racial purity of Aryans in Nazi Germany. In the United States and other democratic forms of government, legitimacy rests on the consent of the governed in periodic elections (though in the United States, the incoming

Steckley, *White Lies about the Inuit* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

3. Elman Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975).

president is sworn in using a Christian Bible despite alleged separation of church and state).

In some societies, dominance by an individual or group is viewed as unacceptable. Christopher Boehm (1999) developed the concept of reverse dominance to describe societies in which people rejected attempts by any individual to exercise power.[4] They achieved this aim using ridicule, criticism, disobedience, and strong disapproval and could banish extreme offenders. Richard Lee encountered this phenomenon when he presented the !Kung with whom he had worked over the preceding year with a fattened ox.[5] Rather than praising or thanking him, his hosts ridiculed the beast as scrawny, ill fed, and probably sick. This behavior is consistent with reverse dominance.

Even in societies that emphasize equality between people, decisions still have to be made. Sometimes particularly persuasive figures such as headmen make them, but persuasive figures who lack formal power are not free to make decisions without coming to a consensus with their fellows. To reach such consensus, there must be general agreement. Essentially, then, even if in a backhanded way, legitimacy characterizes societies that lack institutionalized leadership.

Another set of concepts refers to the reinforcements or consequences for compliance with the directive and laws of a society. Positive reinforcements are the rewards for compliance; examples include medals, financial incentives, and other forms of

4. Christopher Boehm. *Hierarchy in the Forest: The Evolution of Egalitarian Behavior*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

5. Richard Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi* (New York: Thomson, 2003).

public recognition. Negative reinforcements punish noncompliance through fines, imprisonment, and death sentences. These reinforcements can be identified in every human society, even among foragers or others who have no written system of law. Reverse dominance is one form of negative reinforcement.

LEVELS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL INTEGRATION

If cultures of various sizes and configurations are to be compared, there must be some common basis for defining political organization. In many small communities, the family functions as a political unit. As Julian Steward wrote about the Shoshone, a Native American group in the Nevada basin, "all features of the relatively simple culture were integrated and functioned on a family level. The family was the reproductive, economic, educational, political, and religious unit."[6] In larger more complex societies, however, the functions of the family are taken over by larger social institutions. The resources of the economy, for example, are managed by authority figures outside the family who demand taxes or other tribute. The educational function of the family may be taken over by schools constituted under the authority of a government, and the authority structure in the family is likely to be subsumed under the greater power of the state. Therefore, anthropologists need methods for assessing political organizations that can be applied to

6. Julian Steward, *The Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955), 54.

many different kinds of communities. This concept is called levels of socio-cultural integration.

Elman Service (1975) developed an influential scheme for categorizing the political character of societies that recognized four levels of socio-cultural integration: band, tribe, chiefdom, and state.[7] A band is the smallest unit of political organization, consisting of only a few families and no formal leadership positions. Tribes have larger populations but are organized around family ties and have fluid or shifting systems of temporary leadership. Chiefdoms are large political units in which the chief, who usually is determined by heredity, holds a formal position of power. States are the most complex form of political organization and are characterized by a central government that has a monopoly over legitimate uses of physical force, a sizeable bureaucracy, a system of formal laws, and a standing military force.

Each type of political integration can be further categorized as egalitarian, ranked, or stratified. Band societies and tribal societies generally are considered egalitarian—there is no great difference in status or power between individuals and there are as many valued status positions in the societies as there are persons able to fill them. Chiefdoms are ranked societies; there are substantial differences in the wealth and social status of individuals based on how closely related they are to the chief. In ranked societies, there are a limited number of positions of power or status, and only a few can occupy them. State societies are stratified. There are large differences in the wealth, status, and power of individuals based on unequal access to resources and positions of power. Socio-economic classes, for instance, are forms of stratification in many state societies.[8]

7. Elman Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization.*

8. Morton Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society.*

EGALITARIAN SOCIETIES

We humans are not equal in all things. The status of women is low relative to the status of men in many, if not most, societies as we will see. There is also the matter of age. In some societies, the aged enjoy greater prestige than the young; in others, the aged are subjected to discrimination in employment and other areas. Even in Japan, which has traditionally been known for its respect for elders, the prestige of the aged is in decline. And we vary in terms of our abilities. Some are more eloquent or skilled technically than others; some are expert craft persons while others are not; some excel at conceptual thought, whereas for the rest of us, there is always the *For Dummies* book series to manage our computers, software, and other parts of our daily lives such as wine and sex.

In a complex society, it may seem that social classes—differences in wealth and status—are, like death and taxes, inevitable: that one is born into wealth, poverty, or somewhere in between and has no say in the matter, at least at the start of life, and that social class is an involuntary position in society. However, is social class universal? As they say, let's look at the record, in this case ethnographies. We find that among foragers, there is no advantage to hoarding food; in most climates, it will rot before one's eyes. Nor is there much personal property, and leadership, where it exists, is informal. In forager societies, the basic ingredients for social class do not exist. Foragers such as the !Kung, Inuit, and aboriginal Australians, are egalitarian societies in which there are few differences between members in wealth, status, and power. Highly skilled and less skilled hunters do not belong to different strata in the way that the captains of industry do from you and me. The less skilled hunters in egalitarian societies receive a share of the meat and have the right to be heard on important decisions. Egalitarian societies also lack a government or centralized leadership. Their leaders, known as headmen or big men, emerge by consensus of the group. Foraging societies are always egalitarian, but so are many societies that

practice horticulture or pastoralism. In terms of political organization, egalitarian societies can be either bands or tribes.

BAND-LEVEL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Societies organized as a band typically comprise foragers who rely on hunting and gathering and are therefore nomadic, are few in number (rarely exceeding 100 persons), and form small groups consisting of a few families and a shifting population. Bands lack formal leadership. Richard Lee went so far as to say that the Dobe! Kung had no leaders. To quote one of his informants, "Of course we have headmen. Each one of us is headman over himself."[9] At most, a band's leader is *primus inter pares* or "first among equals" assuming anyone is first at all. Modesty is a valued trait; arrogance and competitiveness are not acceptable in societies characterized by reverse dominance. What leadership there is in band societies tends to be transient and subject to shifting circumstances. For example, among the Paiute in North America, "rabbit bosses" coordinated rabbit drives during the hunting season but played no leadership role otherwise. Some "leaders" are excellent mediators who are called on when individuals are involved in disputes while others are perceived as skilled shamans or future-seers who are consulted periodically. There are no formal offices or rules of succession.[10]

9. Richard Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, 109–111.

10. Julian Steward, *The Theory of Culture Change.*

Bands were probably the first political unit to come into existence outside the family itself. There is some debate in anthropology about how the earliest bands were organized. Elman Service argued that patrilocal bands organized around groups of related men served as the prototype, reasoning that groups centered on male family relationships made sense because male cooperation was essential to hunting.[11] M. Kay Martin and Barbara Voorhies pointed out in rebuttal that gathering vegetable foods, which typically was viewed as women's work, actually contributed a greater number of calories in most cultures and thus that matrilocal bands organized around groups of related women would be closer to the norm.[12] Indeed, in societies in which hunting is the primary source of food, such as the Inuit, women tend to be subordinate to men while men and women tend to have roughly equal status in societies that mainly gather plants for food.

Law in Band Societies

Within bands of people, disputes are typically resolved informally. There are no formal mediators or any organizational equivalent of a court of law. A good mediator may emerge—or may not. In some cultures, duels are employed. Among the Inuit, for example, disputants engage in a duel using songs in which, drum in hand,

11. Elman Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Random House, 1962).

12. M. Kay Martin and Barbara Voorhies, *Female of the Species* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975).

they chant insults at each other before an audience. The audience selects the better chanter and thereby the winner in the dispute.[13] The Mbuti of the African Congo use ridicule; even children berate adults for laziness, quarreling, or selfishness. If ridicule fails, the Mbuti elders evaluate the dispute carefully, determine the cause, and, in extreme cases, walk to the center of the camp and criticize the individuals by name, using humor to soften their criticism—the group, after all, must get along.[14]

Warfare in Band Societies

Nevertheless, conflict does sometimes break out into war between bands and, sometimes, within them. Such warfare is usually sporadic and short-lived since bands do not have formal leadership structures or enough warriors to sustain conflict for long. Most of the conflict arises from interpersonal arguments. Among the Tiwi of Australia, for example, failure of one band to reciprocate another band's wife-giving with one of its own female relative led to abduction of women by the aggrieved band, precipitating a "war" that involved some spear-throwing (many did not shoot straight and even some of the onlookers were wounded)

13. E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Law of Primitive Man*, 168.

14. See Colin Turnbull, *The Forest People: A Study of the Pygmies of the Congo* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963) and Colin Turnbull, *The Mbuti Pygmies: Change and Adaptation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983).

but mostly violent talk and verbal abuse.[15] For the Dobe !Kung, Lee found 22 cases of homicide by males and other periodic episodes of violence, mostly in disputes over women—not quite the gentle souls Elizabeth Marshall Thomas depicted in her *Harmless People* (1959).[16]

TRIBAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Whereas bands involve small populations without structure, tribal societies involve at least two well-defined groups linked together in some way and range in population from about 100 to as many as 5,000 people. Though their social institutions can be fairly complex, there are no centralized political structures or offices in the strict sense of those terms. There may be headmen, but there are no rules of succession and sons do not necessarily succeed their fathers as is the case with chiefdoms. Tribal leadership roles are open to anyone—in practice, usually men, especially elder men who acquire leadership positions because of their personal abilities and qualities. Leaders in tribes do not have a means of coercing others or formal powers associated with their positions. Instead, they must persuade others to take actions they feel are needed. A Yanomami headsman, for instance, said that he would never issue an order unless he knew it would be obeyed. The headman Kaobawä exercised influence by

15. C.W. Merton Hart, Arnold R. Pilling, and Jane Goodale. *The Tiwi of North Australia* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988).

16. Richard Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, 112–118.

example and by making suggestions and warning of consequences of taking or not taking an action.[17]

Like bands, tribes are egalitarian societies. Some individuals in a tribe do sometimes accumulate personal property but not to the extent that other tribe members are deprived. And every (almost always male) person has the opportunity to become a headman or leader and, like bands, one's leadership position can be situational. One man may be a good mediator, another an exemplary warrior, and a third capable of leading a hunt or finding a more ideal area for cultivation or grazing herds. An example illustrating this kind of leadership is the big man of New Guinea; the term is derived from the languages of New Guinean tribes (literally meaning "man of influence"). The big man is one who has acquired followers by doing favors they cannot possibly repay, such as settling their debts or providing bride-wealth. He might also acquire as many wives as possible to create alliances with his wives' families. His wives could work to care for as many pigs as possible, for example, and in due course, he could sponsor a pig feast that would serve to put more tribe members in his debt and shame his rivals. It is worth noting that the followers, incapable of repaying the Big Man's gifts, stand metaphorically as beggars to him.[18]

Still, a big man does not have the power of a monarch. His role is not hereditary. His son must demonstrate his worth and acquire his own following—he must become a big man in his own right. Furthermore, there usually are other big men in the village who

17. Napoleon Chagnon, *Yanomamo* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1997), 133–137.

18. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Routledge, 2001 [1925]).

are his potential rivals. Another man who proves himself capable of acquiring a following can displace the existing big man. The big man also has no power to coerce—no army or police force. He cannot prevent a follower from joining another big man, nor can he force the follower to pay any debt owed. There is no New Guinean equivalent of a U.S. marshal. Therefore, he can have his way only by diplomacy and persuasion—which do not always work.[19]

Tribal Systems of Social Integration

Tribal societies have much larger populations than bands and thus must have mechanisms for creating and maintaining connections between tribe members. The family ties that unite members of a band are not sufficient to maintain solidarity and cohesion in the larger population of a tribe. Some of the systems that knit tribes together are based on family (kin) relationships, including various kinds of marriage and family lineage systems, but there are also ways to foster tribal solidarity outside of family arrangements through systems that unite members of a tribe by age or gender.

19. Douglas Oliver, A *Solomon Island Society: Kinship and Leadership among the Siuai of Bougainville* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955). For an account of Ongka, the big man in a Kawelka village, see Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart, *Collaborations and Conflict:* A *Leader through Time* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1999).

RANKED SOCIETIES AND CHIEFDOMS

Unlike egalitarian societies, ranked societies (sometimes called "rank societies") involve greater differentiation between individuals and the kin groups to which they belong. These differences can be, and often are, inherited, but there are no significant restrictions in these societies on access to basic resources. All individuals can meet their basic needs. The most important differences between people of different ranks are based on sumptuary rules—norms that permit persons of higher rank to enjoy greater social status by wearing distinctive clothing, jewelry, and/or decorations denied those of lower rank. Every family group or lineage in the community is ranked in a hierarchy of prestige and power. Furthermore, within families, siblings are ranked by birth order and villages can also be ranked.

The concept of a ranked society leads us directly to the characteristics of chiefdoms. Unlike the position of headman in a band, the position of chief is an *office*—a permanent political status that demands a successor when the current chief dies. There are, therefore, two concepts of chief: the man (women rarely, if ever, occupy these posts) and the office. Thus the expression "The king is dead, long live the king." With the New Guinean big man, there is no formal succession. Other big men will be recognized and eventually take the place of one who dies, but there is no rule stipulating that his eldest son or any son must succeed him. For chiefs, there *must* be a successor and there are rules of succession.

Political chiefdoms usually are accompanied by an economic exchange system known as redistribution in which goods and services flow from the population at large to the central authority represented by the chief. It then becomes the task of the chief to return the flow of goods in another form. The chapter on economics provides additional information about redistribution economies.

These political and economic principles are exemplified by the

potlatch custom of the Kwakwaka'wakw and other indigenous groups who lived in chiefdom societies along the northwest coast of North America from the extreme northwest tip of California through the coasts of Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and southern Alaska. Potlatch ceremonies observed major events such as births, deaths, marriages of important persons, and installment of a new chief. Families prepared for the event by collecting food and other valuables such as fish, berries, blankets, animal skins, carved boxes, and copper. At the potlatch, several ceremonies were held, dances were performed by their "owners," and speeches delivered. The new chief was watched very carefully. Members of the society noted the eloquence of his speech, the grace of his presence, and any mistakes he made, however egregious or trivial. Next came the distribution of gifts, and again the chief was observed. Was he generous with his gifts? Was the value of his gifts appropriate to the rank of the recipient or did he give valuable presents to individuals of relatively low rank? Did his wealth allow him to offer valuable objects?

The next phase of the potlatch was critical to the chief's validation of his position. Visitor after visitor would arise and give long speeches evaluating the worthiness of this successor to the chieftainship of his father. If his performance had so far met their expectations, if his gifts were appropriate, the guests' speeches praised him accordingly. They were less than adulatory if the chief had not performed to their expectations and they deemed the formal eligibility of the successor insufficient. He had to perform. If he did, then the guests' praise not only legitimized the new chief in his role, but also it ensured some measure of peace between villages. Thus, in addition to being a festive event, the potlatch

determined the successor's legitimacy and served as a form of diplomacy between groups.[20]

Much has been made among anthropologists of rivalry potlatches in which competitive gifts were given by rival pretenders to the chieftainship. Philip Drucker argued that competitive potlatches were a product of sudden demographic changes among the indigenous groups on the northwest coast.[21] When smallpox and other diseases decimated hundreds, many potential successors to the chieftainship died, leading to situations in which several potential successors might be eligible for the chieftainship. Thus, competition in potlatch ceremonies became extreme with blankets or copper repaid with ever-larger piles and competitors who destroyed their own valuables to demonstrate their wealth. The events became so raucous that the Canadian government outlawed the displays in the early part of the twentieth century.[22] Prior to

20. Philip Drucker, *Indians of the Northwest Coast* (New York: Natural History Press, 1955).

21. Ibid.

22. For more information about the reasons for the potlatch ban, see Douglas Cole and Ira Chaiken, *An Iron Hand upon the People: The Law against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990). The website of the U'Mista Cultural Society in Alert Bay, British Columbia, Canada offers more information about potlatch traditions and the impact of the ban: www.umista.ca.

that time, it had been sufficient for a successor who was chosen beforehand to present appropriate gifts.[23]

STRATIFIED SOCIETIES

Opposite from egalitarian societies in the spectrum of social classes is the stratified society, which is defined as one in which elites who are a numerical minority control the strategic resources that sustain life. Strategic resources include water for states that depend on irrigation agriculture, land in agricultural societies, and oil in industrial societies. Capital and products and resources used for further production are modes of production that rely on oil and other fossil fuels such as natural gas in industrial societies. (Current political movements call for the substitution of solar and wind power for fossil fuels.)

Operationally, stratification is, as the term implies, a social structure that involves two or more largely mutually exclusive populations. An extreme example is the caste system of traditional Indian society, which draws its legitimacy from Hinduism. In caste systems, membership is determined by birth and remains fixed for life, and social mobility—moving from one social class to another—is not an option. Nor can persons of different castes marry; that is, they are endogamous. Although efforts have been made to abolish castes since India achieved independence in 1947, they still predominate in rural areas.

India's caste system consists of four *varna*, pure castes, and one collectively known as *Dalit* and sometimes as *Harijan*—in English, "untouchables," reflecting the notion that for any *varna* caste

23. Philip Drucker, *Indians of the Northwest Coast*.

member to touch or even see a *Dalit* pollutes them. The topmost *varna* caste is the *Brahmin* or priestly caste. It is composed of priests, governmental officials and bureaucrats at all levels, and other professionals. The next highest is the *Kshatriya*, the warrior caste, which includes soldiers and other military personnel and the police and their equivalents. Next are the *Vaishyas*, who are craftsmen and merchants, followed by the *Sudras* (pronounced "shudra"), who are peasants and menial workers. Metaphorically, they represent the parts of *Manu*, who is said to have given rise to the human race through dismemberment. The head corresponds to *Brahmin*, the arms to *Kshatriya*, the thighs to *Vaishya*, and the feet to the *Sudra*.

There are also a variety of subcastes in India. The most important are the hundreds, if not thousands, of occupational subcastes known as *jatis*. Wheelwrights, ironworkers, landed peasants, landless farmworkers, tailors of various types, and barbers all belong to different *jatis*. Like the broader castes, *jatis* are endogamous and one is born into them. They form the basis of the *jajmani* relationship, which involves the provider of a particular service, the *jajman*, and the recipient of the service, the *kamin*. Training is involved in these occupations but one cannot change vocations. Furthermore, the relationship between the *jajman* and the *kamin* is determined by previous generations. If I were to provide you, my *kamin*, with haircutting services, it would be because my father cut your father's hair. In other words, you would be stuck with me regardless of how poor a barber I might be. This system represents another example of an economy as an instituted process, an economy embedded in society.[24]

Similar restrictions apply to those excluded from the *varna* castes, the "untouchables" or *Dalit*. Under the worst restrictions,

24. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Beacon Press, 1944).

Dalits were thought to pollute other castes. If the shadow of a *Dalit* fell on a *Brahmin*, the *Brahmin* immediately went home to bathe. Thus, at various times and locations, the untouchables were also unseeable, able to come out only at night.[25] *Dalits* were born into jobs considered polluting to other castes, particularly work involving dead animals, such as butchering (Hinduism discourages consumption of meat so the clients were Muslims, Christians, and believers of other religions), skinning, tanning, and shoemaking with leather. Contact between an upper caste person and a person of any lower caste, even if "pure," was also considered polluting and was strictly forbidden.

The theological basis of caste relations is *karma*—the belief that one's caste in this life is the cumulative product of one's acts in past lives, which extends to all beings, from minerals to animals to gods. Therefore, though soul class mobility is nonexistent during a lifetime, it is possible between lifetimes. *Brahmins* justified their station by claiming that they must have done good in their past lives. However, there are indications that the untouchable *Dalits* and other lower castes are not convinced of their legitimation.[26]

Although India's system is the most extreme, it not the only caste system. In Japan, a caste known as *Burakumin* is similar in status to *Dalits*. Though they are no different in physical appearance from other Japanese people, the *Burakumin* people have been forced

25. Bruce Long, "Reincarnation," *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987) and William Maloney, "Dharma," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 4 (New York: Macmillan, 1987).

26. Ravindra Khare, *The Untouchable as Himself: Identity and Pragmatism among the Lucknow Chamars* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

to live in ghettos for centuries. They descend from people who worked in the leather tanning industry, a low-status occupation, and still work in leather industries such as shoemaking. Marriage between *Burakumin* and other Japanese people is restricted, and their children are excluded from public schools.[27]

Some degree of social mobility characterizes all societies, but even so-called open-class societies are not as mobile as one might think. In the United States, for example, actual movement up the social latter is rare despite Horatio Alger and rags-to-riches myths. Stories of individuals "making it" through hard work ignore the majority of individuals whose hard work does not pay off or who actually experience downward mobility. Indeed, the Occupy Movement, which began in 2011, recognizes a dichotomy in American society of the 1 percent (millionaires and billionaires) versus the 99 percent (everyone else), and self-styled socialist Bernie Sanders made this the catch phrase of his campaign for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. In India (a closed-class society), on the other hand, there are exceptions to the caste system. In Rajasthan, for example, those who own or control most of the land are not of the warrior caste as one might expect; they are of the lowest caste and their tenants and laborers are *Brahmins*.[28]

27. Harumi Befu, *Japan: An Anthropological Introduction* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1971).

28. William Haviland, *Cultural Anthropology: The Human Challenge*.

STATE LEVEL OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The state is the most formal of the four levels of political organization under study here. In states, political power is centralized in a government that exercises a monopoly over the legitimate use of force.[29] It is important to understand that the exercise of force constitutes a last resort; one hallmark of a weak state is frequent use of physical force to maintain order. States develop in societies with large, often ethnically diverse populations—hundreds of thousands or more—and are characterized by complex economies that can be driven by command or by the market, social stratification, and an intensive agricultural or industrial base.

Several characteristics accompany a monopoly over use of legitimate force in a state. First, like tribes and chiefdoms, states occupy a more or less clearly defined territory or land defined by boundaries that separate it from other political entities that may or not be states (exceptions are associated with the Islamic State and are addressed later). Ancient Egypt was a state bounded on the west by desert and possibly forager or tribal nomadic peoples. Mesopotamia was a series of city-states competing for territory with other city-states.

Heads of state can be individuals designated as kings, emperors, or monarchs under other names or can be democratically elected, in fact or in name—military dictators, for example, are often called

29. Morton Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) and Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Free Press, 1997 [1947]).

presidents. Usually, states establish some board or group of councilors (e.g., the cabinet in the United States and the politburo in the former Soviet Union.) Often, such councils are supplemented with one or two legislative assemblies. The Roman Empire had a senate (which originated as a body of councilors) and as many as four assemblies that combined patrician (elite) and plebian (general population) influences. Today, nearly all of the world's countries have some sort of an assembly, but many rubber-stamp the executive's decisions (or play an obstructionist role, as in the U.S. Congress during the Obama administration).

States also have an administrative bureaucracy that handles public functions provided for by executive orders and/or legislation. Formally, the administrative offices are typically arranged in a hierarchy and the top offices delegate specific functions to lower ones. Similar hierarchies are established for the personnel in a branch. In general, agricultural societies tend to rely on inter-personal relations in the administrative structure while industrial states rely on rational hierarchical structures.[30]

An additional state power is taxation—a system of redistribution in which all citizens are required to participate. This power is exercised in various ways. Examples include the *mitá* or labor tax of the Inca, the tributary systems of Mesopotamia, and monetary taxes familiar to us today and to numerous subjects throughout the history of the state. Control over others' resources is an influential mechanism undergirding the power of the state.

A less tangible but no less powerful characteristic of states is their ideologies, which are designed to reinforce the right of powerholders to rule. Ideologies can manifest in philosophical forms, such as the divine right of kings in pre-industrial Europe, karma and the caste system in India, consent of the governed in

30. For instance, Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization.*

the United States, and the metaphorical family in Imperial China. More often, ideologies are less indirect and less perceptible as propaganda. We might watch the Super Bowl or follow the latest antics of the Kardashians, oblivious to the notion that both are diversions from the reality of power in this society. Young Americans, for example, may be drawn to military service to fight in Iraq by patriotic ideologies just as their parents or grandparents were drawn to service during the Vietnam War. In a multitude of ways across many cultures, Plato's parable of the shadows in the cave—that watchers misperceive shadows as reality—has served to reinforce political ideologies.

Finally, there is delegation of the state's coercive power. The state's need to use coercive power betrays an important weakness—subjects and citizens often refuse to recognize the powerholders' right to rule. Even when the legitimacy of power is not questioned, the use and/or threat of force serves to maintain the state, and that function is delegated to agencies such as the police to maintain internal order and to the military to defend the state against real and perceived enemies and, in many cases, to expand the state's territory. Current examples include a lack of accountability for the killing of black men and women by police officers; the killing of Michael Brown by Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri, is a defining example.

State and Nation

Though state and nation are often used interchangeably, they are not the same thing. A state is a coercive political institution; a nation is an ethnic population. There currently are about 200 states in the world, and many of them did not exist before World War II. Meanwhile, there are around 5,000 nations identified by

their language, territorial base, history, and political organization.[31] Few states are conterminous with a nation (a nation that wholly comprises the state). Even in Japan, where millions of the country's people are of a single ethnicity, there is a significant indigenous minority known as the Ainu who at one time were a distinct biological population as well as an ethnic group. Only recently has Japanese society opened its doors to immigrants, mostly from Korea and Taiwan. The vast majority of states in the world, including the United States, are multi-national.

Some ethnicities/nations have no state of their own. The Kurds, who reside in adjacent areas of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, are one such nation. In the colonial era, the Mande-speaking peoples ranged across at least four West African countries, and borders between the countries were drawn without respect to the tribal identities of the people living there. Diasporas, the scattering of a people of one ethnicity across the globe, are another classic example. The diaspora of Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews is well-known. Many others, such as the Chinese, have more recently been forced to flee their homelands. The current ongoing mass migration of Syrians induced by formation of the Islamic State and the war in Syria is but the most recent example.

Formation of States

How do states form? One precondition is the presence of a stratified society in which an elite minority controls life-sustaining strategic resources. Another is increased agricultural productivity

31. J.W. Clay, "What's a Nation?" in *Talking about People*, William Haviland and R.J. Gordon, eds. (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield), 1996.

that provides support for a larger population. Neither, however, is a sufficient cause for development of a state. A group of people who are dissatisfied with conditions in their home region has a motive to move elsewhere—unless there is nowhere else to go and they are circumscribed. Circumscription can arise when a region is hemmed in by a geographic feature such as mountain ranges or desert and when migrants would have to change their subsistence strategies, perhaps having to move from agriculture back to foraging, herding, or horticulture or to adapt to an urban industrialized environment. The Inca Empire did not colonize on a massive scale beyond northern Chile to the south or into the Amazon because indigenous people there could simply pick up and move elsewhere. Still, the majority of the Inca population did not have that option. Circumscription also results when a desirable adjacent region is taken by other states or chiefdoms.[32]

Who, then, were the original subjects of these states? One short answer is peasants, a term derived from the French *paysan*, which means "countryman." Peasantry entered the anthropological literature relatively late. In his 800-page tome *Anthropology* published in 1948, Alfred L. Kroeber defined peasantry in less than a sentence: "part societies with part cultures."[33] Robert Redfield defined peasantry as a "little tradition" set against a "great tradition"

32. Robert Carneiro, "A Theory of the Origin of the State." *Science* 169 no. 3947 (1970): 733–738 and Robert Carneiro, "Chiefdom: Precursor to the State," in *The Transition to Statehood in the New World*, Grant Jones and Robert Kautz, eds. 37–75. New York: Cambridge University Press.

33. Alfred L. Kroeber, *Anthropology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1948), 284.

of national state society.[34] Louis Fallers argued in 1961 against calling African cultivators "peasants" because they had not lived in the context of a state-based civilization long enough.[35]

Thus, peasants had been defined in reference to some larger society, usually an empire, a state, or a civilization. In light of this, Wolf sought to place the definition of peasant on a structural footing.[36] Using a funding metaphor, he compared peasants with what he called "primitive cultivators." Both primitive cultivators and peasants have to provide for a "caloric fund" by growing food and, by extension, provide for clothing, shelter, and all other necessities of life. Second, both must provide for a "replacement fund"—not only reserving seeds for next year's crop but also repairing their houses, replacing broken pots, and rebuilding fences. And both primitive cultivators and peasants must provide a "ceremonial fund" for rites of passage and fiestas. They differ in that peasants live in states and primitive cultivators do not. The state exercises domain over peasants' resources, requiring peasants to provide a "fund of rent." That fund appears in many guises, including tribute in kind, monetary taxes, and forced labor to an empire or lord. In Wolf's

34. Robert Redfield, *The Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

35. Louis Fallers, "Are African Cultivators to Be Called Peasants?" *Current Anthropology* 2 no. 2 (1961): 108–110.

36. Eric Wolf, *Peasants*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

conception, primitive cultivators are free of these obligations to the state.[37]

Subjects of states are not necessarily landed; there is a long history of landless populations. Slavery has long coexisted with the state, and forced labor without compensation goes back to chiefdoms such as Kwakwaka'wakw. Long before Portuguese, Spanish, and English seafarers began trading slaves from the west coast of Africa, Arab groups enslaved people from Africa and Europe.[38]

For peasants, proletarianization — loss of land—has been a continuous process. One example is landed gentry in eighteenth century England who found that sheepherding was more profitable than tribute from peasants and removed the peasants from the land.[39] A similar process occurred when Guatemala's liberal president privatized the land of Mayan peasants that, until 1877, had been held communally.[40]

37. Ibid.

38. Leften S. Stavrianos, *Global Rift* (New York: Quill, 1974).

39. Michael Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 38–59.

40. For more information about land privatization, see Paul V. McDowell, "Political and Religious Change in a Guatemalan Factory Community." Ph.D. Diss., University of British Columbia, 1974 and Paul V. McDowell, "The Decline of the Civil-Religious Hierarchy: The Case of

Law and Order in States

At the level of the state, the law becomes an increasingly formal process. Procedures are more and more regularly defined, and categories of breaches in civil and criminal law emerge, together with remedies for those breaches. Early agricultural states formalized legal rules and punishments through codes, formal courts, police forces, and legal specialists such as lawyers and judges. Mediation could still be practiced, but it often was supplanted by adjudication in which a judge's decision was binding on all parties. Decisions could be appealed to a higher authority, but any final decision must be accepted by all concerned.

The first known system of codified law was enacted under the warrior king Hammurabi in Babylon (present day Iraq). This law was based on standardized procedures for dealing with civil and criminal offenses, and subsequent decisions were based on precedents (previous decisions). Crimes became offenses not only against other parties but also against the state. Other states developed similar codes of law, including China, Southeast Asia, and state-level Aztec and Inca societies. Two interpretations, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, have arisen about the political function of codified systems of law. Fried (1978) argued, based on his analysis of the Hammurabi codes, that such laws reinforced a system of inequality by protecting the rights of an elite class and keeping peasants subordinates.[41] This is consistent with the theory of a

Cantel." *NorthSouth: Canadian Journal of Latin American Studies* 35 no. 10 (1980):17–35.

41. Morton Fried "The State, the Chicken, and the Egg or What Came First?" In *Origins of the State*, edited by

stratified society as already defined. Another interpretation is that maintenance of social and political order is crucial for agricultural states since any disruption in the state would lead to neglect of agricultural production that would be deleterious to all members of the state regardless of their social status. Civil laws ensure, at least in theory, that all disputing parties receive a hearing—so long as high legal expenses and bureaucratic logjams do not cancel out the process. Criminal laws, again in theory, ensure the protection of all citizens from offenses ranging from theft to homicide.

Inevitably, laws fail to achieve their aims. The United States, for example, has one of the highest crime rates in the industrial world despite having an extensive criminal legal system. The number of homicides in New York City in 1990 exceeded the number of deaths from colon and breast cancer and all accidents combined.[42] Although the rate of violent crime in the United States declined during the mid-1990s, it occurred thanks more to the construction of more prisons per capita (in California) than of schools. Nationwide, there currently are more than one million prisoners in state and federal correctional institutions, one of the highest national rates in the industrial world.[43] Since the 1990s, little has changed in terms of imprisonment in the United States. Funds continue to go to prisons rather than schools, affecting the

Ronald Cohen and Elman Service. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1978.

42. Sam Roberts, "Fighting the Tide of Bloodshed on Streets Resembling a War Zone." *New York Times*, November 15, 1993: B12.

43. Fox Butterfield, "Study Finds Disparity of Justice for Blacks." *New York Times*, Feb. 13, 1996 8A.

education of minority communities and expanding "slave labor" in prisons, according to Michelle Alexander who, in 2012, called the current system the school-to-prison pipeline.[44]

Warfare in States

Warfare occurs in all human societies but at no other level of political organization is it as widespread as in states. Indeed, warfare was integral to the formation of the agricultural state. As governing elites accumulated more resources, warfare became a major means of increasing their surpluses.[45] And as the wealth of states became a target of nomadic pastoralists, the primary motivation for warfare shifted from control of resources to control of neighboring populations.[46]

A further shift came with the advent of industrial society when industrial technologies driven by fossil fuels allowed states to invade distant countries. A primary motivation for these wars was to

44. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness*. New York: The New Press, 2010.

45. V. Gordon Childe, "The Urban Revolution." *Town Planning Review* 21 (1950): 3–17.

46. Keith Otterbein "The Anthropology of War," in *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, John Huntington, ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974) and *The Evolution of War: A Cross-cultural Study* (New Haven, CT: Human Relation Area Files, 1989).

establish economic and political hegemony over foreign populations. World War I, World War II, and lesser wars of the past century have driven various countries to develop ever more sophisticated and deadly technologies, including wireless communication devices for remote warfare, tanks, stealth aircraft, nuclear weapons, and unmanned aircraft called drones, which have been used in conflicts in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Competition among nations has led to the emergence of the United States as the most militarily powerful nation in the world.

The expansion of warfare by societies organized as states has not come without cost. Every nation-state has involved civilians in its military adventures, and almost everyone has been involved in those wars in some way—if not as militarily, then as member of the civilian workforce in military industries. World War II created an unprecedented armament industry in the United States, Britain, Germany, and Japan, among others, and the aerospace industry underwent expansion in the so-called Cold War that followed. Today, one can scarcely overlook the role of the process of globalization to explain how the United States, for now an empire, has influenced the peoples of other countries in the world.

Stability and Duration of States

It should be noted that states have a clear tendency toward instability despite trappings designed to induce awe in the wider population. Few states have lasted a thousand years. The American state is more than 240 years old but increases in extreme wealth and poverty, escalating budget and trade deficits, a war initiated under false pretenses, escalating social problems, and a highly controversial presidential election suggest growing instability. Jared Diamond's book *Collapse* (2004) compared the decline and fall of Easter Island, Chaco Canyon, and the Maya with contemporary societies such as the United States, and he found that overtaxing

the environment caused the collapse of those three societies.[47] Chalmers Johnson (2004) similarly argued that a state of perpetual war, loss of democratic institutions, systematic deception by the state, and financial overextension contributed to the decline of the Roman Empire and will likely contribute to the demise of the United States "with the speed of FedEx."[48]

Why states decline is not difficult to fathom. Extreme disparities in wealth, use of force to keep populations in line, the stripping of people's resources (such as the enclosures in England that removed peasants from their land), and the harshness of many laws all should create a general animosity toward the elite in a state.

Yet, until recently (following the election of Donald Trump), no one in the United States was taking to the streets calling for the president to resign or decrying the government as illegitimate. In something of a paradox, widespread animosity does not necessarily lead to dissolution of a state or to an overthrow of the elite. Thomas Frank addressed this issue in *What's the Matter with Kansas?* (2004). Despite the fact that jobs have been shipped abroad, that once-vibrant cities like Wichita are virtual ghost towns, and that both congress and the state legislature have voted against social programs time and again, Kansans continued to vote the Republicans whose policies are responsible for these conditions into office.

Nor is this confined to Kansas or the United States. That slaves tolerated slavery for hundreds of years (despite periodic revolts

47. Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Viking, 2004).

48. Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empires: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005), 285.

such as the one under Nat Turner in 1831), that workers tolerated extreme conditions in factories and mines long before unionization, that there was no peasant revolt strong enough to reverse the enclosures in England—all demand an explanation. Frank discusses reinforcing variables, such as propaganda by televangelists and Rush Limbaugh but offers little explanation beside them.[49] However, recent works have provided new explanations. Days before Donald Trump won the presidential election on November 8, 2016, sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild released a book that partially explains how Trump appealed to the most marginalized populations of the United States, residents around Lake Charles in southwestern Louisiana. In the book, *Strangers in Their Own Land* (2016), Hochschild contends that the predominantly white residents there saw the federal government providing preferential treatment for blacks, women, and other marginalized populations under affirmative action programs while putting white working-class individuals further back in line for governmental assistance. The people Hochschild interviewed were fully aware that a corporate petroleum company had polluted Lake Charles and hired nonlocal technicians and Filipino workers to staff local positions, but they nonetheless expressed their intent to vote for a billionaire for president based on his promise to bring outsourced jobs back to "America" and to make the country "great again." Other books, including Thomas Frank's *Listen Liberal* (2016), Nancy Isenberg's *White Trash* (2016), and Matt Wray's *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness* (2006), address the decline of the United States' political power domestically and worldwide. These books all link Trump's successful election to marginalization of

49. Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004).

lower-class whites and raise questions about how dissatisfaction with the state finds expression in political processes.

Stratification and the State: Recent Developments

States elsewhere and the stratified societies that sustain them have undergone significant changes and, in some instances, dramatic transformations in recent years. Consider ISIS, formed in reaction to the ill-advised U.S. intervention in Iraq in 2003, which is discussed in greater detail in the case study available from the Perspectives website. Other states have failed; Somalia has all but dissolved and is beset by piracy, Yemen is highly unstable due in part to the Saudi invasion, and Syria has been decimated by conflict between the Bashar Assad government and a variety of rebel groups from moderate reform movements to extremist jihadi groups, al-Nusra and ISIS. Despite Myanmar's (formerly Burma) partial transition from a militarized government to an elective one, the Muslim minority there, known as Rohingya, has been subjected to discrimination and many have been forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh. Meanwhile, Bangladesh has been unable to enforce safety regulations to foreign investors as witnessed by the collapse of a clothing factory in 2013 that took the lives of more than 1,100 workers.

CONCLUSION

Citing both state and stateless societies, this chapter has examined levels of socio-cultural integration, types of social class (from none to stratified), and mechanisms of social control

exercised in various forms of political organization from foragers to large, fully developed states. The chapter offers explanations for these patterns; still, there are many more questions than answers. Why does socio-economic inequality arise in the first place? How do states reinforce (or generate) inequality? Societies that have not developed a state have lasted far longer—about 100,000 to 150,000 years longer—than societies that became states. Will states persist despite the demonstrable disadvantages they present for the majority of their citizens?

A Chinese curse wishes that you may "live in interesting times."
These are interesting times indeed.

PART III

FIELDWORK AND ETHICS

4. Doing Fieldwork: Methods in Cultural Anthropology

"Doing Fieldwork: Methods in Cultural Anthropology"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Kate Nelson (knelson@inverhills.edu)

FINDING THE FIELD

Fieldwork is the most important method by which cultural anthropologists gather data to answer their research questions. While interacting on a daily basis with a group of people, cultural anthropologists document their observations and perceptions and adjust the focus of their research as needed. They typically spend a few months to a few years living among the people they are studying.

The "field" can be anywhere the people are—a village in highland Papua New Guinea or a supermarket in downtown Minneapolis. Just as marine biologists spend time in the ocean to learn about

the behavior of marine animals and geologists travel to a mountain range to observe rock formations, anthropologists go to places where people are.

Doing Anthropology

In this short film, Stefan Helmreich, Erica James, and Heather Paxson, three members of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Anthropology Department, talk about their current work and the process of doing fieldwork.

Making the Strange Familiar and the Familiar Strange

The cultural anthropologist's goal during fieldwork is to describe a group of people to others in a way that makes strange or unusual features of the culture seem familiar and familiar traits seem extraordinary. The point is to help people think in new ways about aspects of their own culture by comparing them with other cultures. The research anthropologist Margaret Mead describes in her monograph *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) is a famous example of this. In 1925, Mead went to American Samoa, where she conducted ethnographic research on adolescent girls and their experiences with sexuality and growing up. Mead's mentor, anthropologist Franz Boas, was a strong proponent of cultural determinism, the idea that one's cultural upbringing and social environment, rather than one's biology, primarily determine behavior. Boas encouraged Mead to travel to Samoa to study adolescent behavior there and to compare their culture and behavior with that of adolescents in the United States to lend support to his hypothesis. In the foreword of *Coming*

of Age in Samoa, Boas described what he saw as the key insight of her research: "The results of her painstaking investigation confirm the suspicion long held by anthropologists that much of what we ascribe to human nature is no more than a reaction to the restraints put upon us by our civilization."[1]

Mead studied 25 young women in three villages in Samoa and found that the stress, anxiety, and turmoil of American adolescence were not found among Samoan youth. Rather, young women in Samoa experienced a smooth transition to adulthood with relatively little stress or difficulty. She documented instances of socially accepted sexual experimentation, lack of sexual jealousy and rape, and a general sense of casualness that marked Samoan adolescence. *Coming of Age in Samoa* quickly became popular, launching Mead's career as one of the most well-known anthropologists in the United States and perhaps the world. The book encouraged American readers to reconsider their own cultural assumptions about what adolescence in the United States should be like, particularly in terms of the sexual repression and turmoil that seemed to characterize the teenage experience in mid-twentieth century America. Through her analysis of the differences between Samoan and American society, Mead also persuasively called for changes in education and parenting for U.S. children and adolescents.

Another classic example of a style of anthropological writing that attempted to make the familiar strange and encouraged readers to consider their own cultures in a different way is Horace Miner's *Body Ritual among the Nacirema* (1956). The essay described oral hygiene practices of the Nacirema ("American" spelled backward) in a way that, to cultural insiders, sounded extreme, exaggerated, and out of context. He presented the Nacirema as if they were a little-known cultural group with strange, exotic

1. [2]
2. [1]

practices. Miner wrote the essay during an era in which anthropologists were just beginning to expand their focus beyond small-scale traditional societies far from home to large-scale post-industrial societies such as the United States. He wrote the essay primarily as a satire of how anthropologists often wrote about "the Other" in ways that made other cultures seem exotic and glossed over features that the Other had in common with the anthropologist's culture. The essay also challenged U.S. readers in general and anthropologists in particular to think differently about their own cultures and re-examine their cultural assumptions about what is "normal."

Emic and Etic Perspectives

When anthropologists conduct fieldwork, they gather data. An important tool for gathering anthropological data is ethnography —the in-depth study of everyday practices and lives of a people. Ethnography produces a detailed description of the studied group at a particular time and location, also known as a "thick description" a term coined by anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his 1973 book *The Interpretation of Cultures* to describe this type of research and writing. A thick description explains not only the behavior or cultural event in question but also the context in which it occurs and anthropological interpretations of it. Such descriptions help readers better understand the internal logic of why people in a culture behave as they do and why the behaviors are meaningful to them. This is important because understanding the attitudes, perspectives, and motivations of cultural insiders is at the heart of anthropology.

Ethnographers gather data from many different sources. One source is the anthropologist's own observations and thoughts. Ethnographers keep field notebooks that document their ideas and reflections as well as what they do and observe when participating

in activities with the people they are studying, a research technique known as participant observation. Other sources of data include informal conversations and more-formal interviews that are recorded and transcribed. They also collect documents such as letters, photographs, artifacts, public records, books, and reports.

Different types of data produce different kinds of ethnographic descriptions, which also vary in terms of perspective—from the perspective of the studied culture (emic) or from the perspective of the observer (etic). Emic perspectives refer to descriptions of behaviors and beliefs in terms that are meaningful to people who belong to a specific culture, e.g., how people perceive and categorize their culture and experiences, why people believe they do what they do, how they imagine and explain things. To uncover emic perspectives, ethnographers talk to people, observe what they do, and participate in their daily activities with them. Emic perspectives are essential for anthropologists' efforts to obtain a detailed understanding of a culture and to avoid interpreting others through their own cultural beliefs.

Etic perspectives refer to explanations for behavior by an outside observer in ways that are meaningful to the observer. For an anthropologist, etic descriptions typically arise from conversations between the ethnographer and the anthropological community. These explanations tend to be based in science and are informed by historical, political, and economic studies and other types of research. The etic approach acknowledges that members of a culture are unlikely to view the things they do as noteworthy or unusual. They cannot easily stand back and view their own behavior objectively or from another perspective. For example, you may have never thought twice about the way you brush your teeth and the practice of going to the dentist or how you experienced your teenage years. For you, these parts of your culture are so normal and "natural" you probably would never consider questioning them. An emic lens gives us an alternative perspective that is essential when constructing a comprehensive view of a people.

Most often, ethnographers include both emic and etic

perspectives in their research and writing. They first uncover a studied people's understanding of what they do and why and then develop additional explanations for the behavior based on anthropological theory and analysis. Both perspectives are important, and it can be challenging to move back and forth between the two. Nevertheless, that is exactly what good ethnographers must do.

TRADITIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACHES

Off the Veranda and Salvage Ethnography

Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski's (1884–1942) pioneering method of participant observation fundamentally changed the relationship between ethnographers and the people under study. In 1914, he traveled to the Trobriand Islands and ended up spending nearly four years conducting fieldwork among the people there. In the process, he developed a rigorous set of detailed ethnographic techniques he viewed as best-suited to gathering accurate and comprehensive ethnographic data. One of the hallmarks of his method was that it required the researcher to get off the veranda to interact with and even live among the natives. In a well-known book about his research, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), Malinowski described his research techniques and the role they played in his analysis of the Kula ceremony, an exchange of coral armbands and trinkets among members of the social elite. He concluded that the ceremonies were at the center of Trobriand life and represented the culmination of an elaborate multi-year venture called the Kula Ring that involved dangerous expeditions and careful planning. Ultimately, the key to his discovering the importance of

the ceremony was that he not only observed the Kula Ring but also participated in it. This technique of participant observation is central to anthropological research today. Malinowski did more than just observe people from afar; he actively interacted with them and participated in their daily activities. And unlike early anthropologists who worked through translators, Malinowski learned the native language, which allowed him to immerse himself in the culture. He carefully documented all of his observations and thoughts. Malinowski's techniques are now central components of ethnographic fieldwork.

Despite Malinowski's tremendous contributions to ethnography and anthropology generally, he was nevertheless a man of his time. A common view in the first half of the twentieth century was that many "primitive" cultures were quickly disappearing and features of those cultures needed to be preserved (salvaged) before they were lost. Anthropologists such as Malinowski, Franz Boas, and many of their students sought to document, photograph, and otherwise preserve cultural traditions in "dying" cultures in, often Indigenous, groups experiencing rapid change due to modernization, dislocation, and contact with outside groups. They also collected cultural artifacts, removing property from the communities and placing it in museums and private collections.

Photographers and artists have likewise attempted to capture and preserve traditional indigenous life in paintings and photographs. Renowned painter George Catlin (1796–1872), for example, is known to have embellished scenes or painted them in ways that glossed over the difficult reality that native people in the nineteenth century were actively persecuted by the government, displaced from their lands, and forced into unsustainable lifestyles that led to starvation and warfare. Photographer Edward S. Curtis (1868–1952) has been criticized for reinforcing romanticized images of "authentic" native scenes. In particular, he is accused of having perpetuated the problematic idea of the noble savage and, in the process, distracted

attention from the serious social, political, and economic problems faced by native people.[3]

Today, anthropologists recognize that human cultures constantly change as people respond to social, political, economic, and other external and internal influences—that there is no moment when a culture is more authentic or more primitive. They acknowledge that culture is fluid and cannot be treated as isolated in time and space. Just as we should not portray people as primitive vestiges of an earlier stage of human development, we also should not romanticize a culture or idealize another's suffering as more authentic or natural.

Holism

In the throes of salvage ethnography, anthropologists in the first half of the twentieth century actively documented anything and everything they could about the cultures they viewed as endangered. They collected artifacts, excavated ancient sites, wrote dictionaries of non-literate languages, and documented cultural traditions, stories, and beliefs. In the United States, those efforts developed into what is known today as the four-field approach or simply as general anthropology. This approach integrates multiple scientific and humanistic perspectives into a single comprehensive discipline composed of sociocultural, archaeological, biological/physical, and linguistic anthropology.

A hallmark of the four-field approach is its holistic perspective: anthropologists are interested in studying everything that makes us human. Thus, they use multiple approaches to understanding humans throughout time and throughout the world. They also

3. [4]

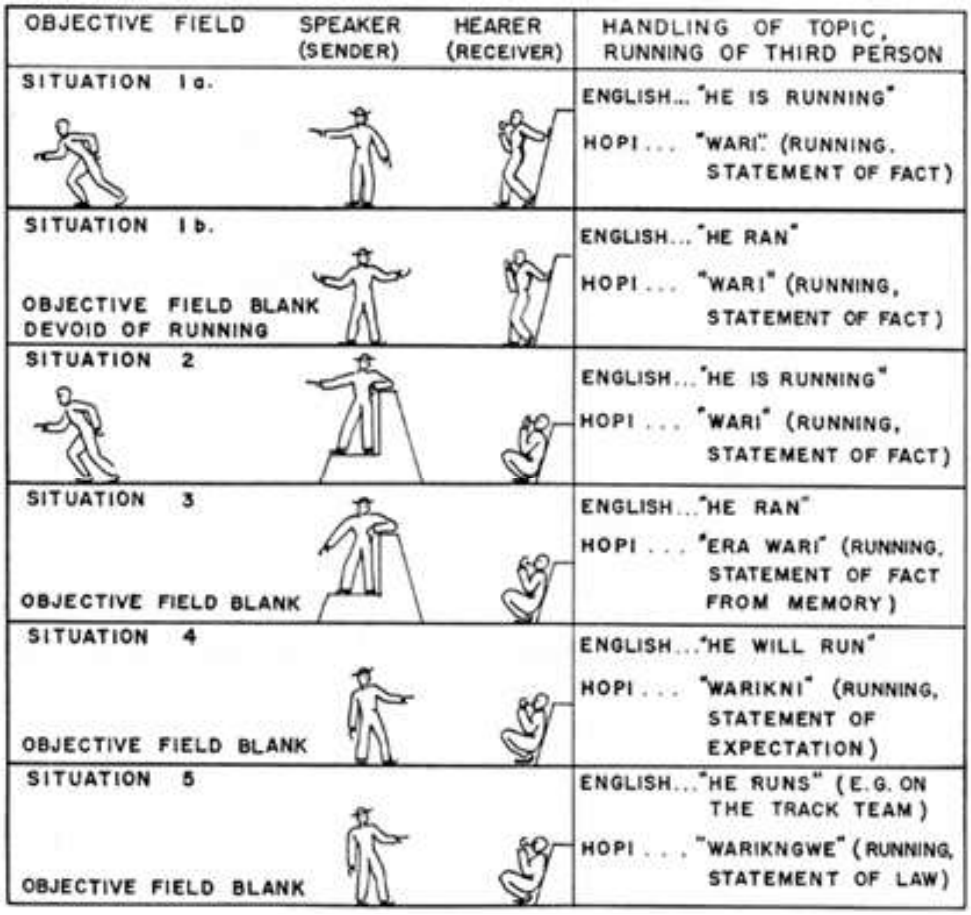
4. [2]

acknowledge that to understand people fully one cannot look solely at biology, culture, history, or language; rather, all of those things must be considered. The interrelationships between the four subfields of anthropology are important for many anthropologists today.

Linguistic anthropologists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, for instance, examined interrelationships between culture, language, and cognition. They argued that the language one speaks plays a critical role in determining how one thinks, particularly in terms of understanding time, space, and matter. They proposed that people who speak different languages view the world differently as a result. In a well-known example, Whorf contrasted the Hopi and English languages. Because verbs in Hopi contained no future or past tenses, Whorf argued that Hopi-speakers understand time in a fundamentally different way than English-speakers. An observation by an English-speaker would focus on the difference in time while an observation by a Hopi-speaker would focus on validity.[5]

5. [6]

6. [3]



A chart from a 1940 publication by Whorf illustrates differences between a "temporal" language (English) and a "timeless" language (Hopi).

Although some scholars have criticized Sapir and Whorf's conclusions as overly deterministic, their work certainly illustrates the presence of a relationship between language and thought and between cultural and biological influences. Words may not force people to think a particular way, but they can influence our thought processes and how we view the world around us. The holistic perspective of anthropology helps us to appreciate that our culture, language, and physical and cognitive capacities for language are interrelated in complex ways.

ETHNOGRAPHY TODAY

Anthropology's Distinctive Research Strategy

Ethnography is cultural anthropology's distinctive research strategy. It was originally developed by anthropologists to study small-scale, relatively isolated cultural groups. Typically, those groups had relatively simple economies and technologies and limited access to larger, more technologically advanced societies. Early ethnographers sought to understand the entirety of a particular culture. They spent months to years living in the community, and in that time, they documented in great detail every dimension of people's lives, including their language, subsistence strategies, political systems, formation of families and marriages, and religious beliefs. This was important because it helped researchers appreciate the interconnectedness of all dimensions of social life. The key to the success of this ethnographic approach was not only to spend considerable time observing people in their home settings engaged in day-to-day activities but also to participate in those activities. Participation informed an emic perspective of the culture, something that had been missing in earlier social science research.

Because of how useful the ethnographic research strategy is in developing an emic perspective, it has been adopted by many other disciplines including sociology, education, psychology, and political science. Education researchers, for example, use ethnography to study children in classrooms to identify their learning strategies and how they understand and make sense of learning experiences. Sociologists use ethnography to study emerging social movements and how participants in such movements stay motivated and connected despite their sometimes-conflicting goals.

New Sites for Ethnographic Fieldwork

Like the cultures and peoples studied, anthropology and ethnography are evolving. Field sites for ethnographic research are no longer exclusively located in far-flung, isolated, non-industrialized societies. Increasingly, anthropologists are conducting ethnographic research in complex, technologically advanced societies such as the United States and in urban environments elsewhere in the world. For instance, my doctoral research took place in the United States. I studied identity formation among undocumented Mexican immigrant college students in Minnesota. Because some of my informants were living in Mexico when my fieldwork ended, I also traveled to Veracruz, Mexico, and spent time conducting research there. Often, anthropologists who study migration, diasporas, and people in motion must conduct research in multiple locations. This is known as multi-sited ethnography.

Anthropologists use ethnography to study people wherever they are and however they interact with others. Think of the many ways you ordinarily interact with your friends, family, professors, and boss. Is it all face-to-face communication or do you sometimes use text messages to chat with your friends? Do you also sometimes email your professor to ask for clarification on an assignment and then call your boss to discuss your schedule? Do you share funny videos with others on Facebook and then later make a Skype video call to a relative? These new technological "sites" of human interaction are fascinating to many ethnographers and have expanded the definition of fieldwork.

Problem-Oriented Research

In the early years, ethnographers were interested in exploring the

entirety of a culture. Taking an inductive approach, they generally were not concerned about arriving with a relatively narrow predefined research topic. Instead, the goal was to explore the people, their culture, and their homelands and what had previously been written about them. The focus of the study was allowed to emerge gradually during their time in the field. Often, this approach to ethnography resulted in rather general ethnographic descriptions.

Today, anthropologists are increasingly taking a more deductive approach to ethnographic research. Rather than arriving at the field site with only general ideas about the goals of the study, they tend to select a particular problem before arriving and then let that problem guide their research. In my case, I was interested in how undocumented Mexican immigrant youth in Minnesota formed a sense of identity while living in a society that used a variety of dehumanizing labels such as illegal and alien to refer to them. That was my research "problem," and it oriented and guided my study from beginning to end. I did not document every dimension of my informants' lives; instead, I focused on the things most closely related to my research problem.

Quantitative Methods

Increasingly, cultural anthropologists are using quantitative research methods to complement qualitative approaches. Qualitative research in anthropology aims to comprehensively describe human behavior and the contexts in which it occurs while quantitative research seeks patterns in numerical data that can explain aspects of human behavior. Quantitative patterns can be gleaned from statistical analyses, maps, charts, graphs, and textual descriptions. Surveys are a common quantitative technique that usually involves closed-ended questions in which respondents select their responses from a list of pre-defined choices such as

their degree of agreement or disagreement, multiple-choice answers, and rankings of items. While surveys usually lack the sort of contextual detail associated with qualitative research, they tend to be relatively easy to code numerically and, as a result, can be easier to analyze than qualitative data. Surveys are also useful for gathering specific data points within a large population, something that is challenging to do with many qualitative techniques.

Anthropological nutritional analysis is an area of research that commonly relies on collecting quantitative data. Nutritional anthropologists explore how factors such as culture, the environment, and economic and political systems interplay to impact human health and nutrition. They may count the calories people consume and expend, document patterns of food consumption, measure body weight and body mass, and test for the presence of parasite infections or nutritional deficiencies. In her ethnography *Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa* (1993), Katherine Dettwyler described how she conducted nutritional research in Mali, which involved weighing, measuring, and testing her research subjects to collect a variety of quantitative data to help her understand the causes and consequences of child malnutrition.

Mixed Methods

In recent years, anthropologists have begun to combine ethnography with other types of research methods. These mixed-method approaches integrate qualitative and quantitative evidence to provide a more comprehensive analysis. For instance, anthropologists can combine ethnographic data with questionnaires, statistical data, and a media analysis. Anthropologist Leo Chavez used mixed methods to conduct the research for his book *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (2008). He started with a problem: how has citizenship been discussed as an identity marker in the mainstream media in the

United States, especially among those labeled as Latinos. He then looked for a variety of types of data and relied on ethnographic case studies and on quantitative data from surveys and questionnaires. Chavez also analyzed a series of visual images from photographs, magazine covers, and cartoons that depicted Latinos to explore how they are represented in the American mainstream.

ETHNOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES AND PERSPECTIVES

Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism

The guiding philosophy of modern anthropology is cultural relativism —the idea that we should seek to understand another person's beliefs and behaviors from the perspective of their culture rather than our own. Anthropologists do not judge other cultures based on their values nor view other cultural ways of doing things as inferior. Instead, anthropologists seek to understand people's beliefs within the system they have for explaining things.

Cultural relativism is an important methodological consideration when conducting research. In the field, anthropologists must temporarily suspend their own value, moral, and esthetic judgments and seek to understand and respect the values, morals, and esthetics of the other culture on their terms. This can be a challenging task, particularly when a culture is significantly different from the one in which they were raised.

Another perspective that has been rejected by anthropologists is ethnocentrism. People who are ethnocentric view their own cultures as central and normal and reject all other cultures as inferior and morally suspect. As it turns out, many people and cultures are ethnocentric to some degree; ethnocentrism is a

common human experience. Why do we respond the way we do? Why do we behave the way we do? Why do we believe what we believe? Most people find these kinds of questions difficult to answer. Often the answer is simply "because that is how it is done." They believe what they believe because that is what one normally believes and doing things any other way seems wrong.

Ethnocentrism is not a useful perspective in contexts in which people from different cultural backgrounds come into close contact with one another, as is the case in many cities and communities throughout the world. People increasingly find that they must adopt culturally relativistic perspectives in governing communities and as a guide for their interactions with members of the community. For anthropologists in the field, cultural relativism is especially important. We must set aside our innate ethnocentrisms and let cultural relativism guide our inquiries and interactions with others so that our observations are not biased. Cultural relativism is at the core of the discipline of anthropology.

Objectivity and Activist Anthropology

Despite the importance of cultural relativism, it is not always possible and at times is inappropriate to maintain complete objectivity in the field. Researchers may encounter cultural practices that are an affront to strongly held moral values or that violate the human rights of a segment of a population. In other cases, they may be conducting research in part to advocate for a particular issue or for the rights of a marginalized group.

Take, for example, the practice of female genital cutting (FGC), also known as female genital mutilation (FGM), a practice that is common in various regions of the world, especially in parts of Africa and the Middle East. Such practices involving modification of female genitals for non-medical and cultural reasons range from clitoridectomy (partial or full removal of the clitoris) to infibulation,

which involves removal of the clitoris and the inner and outer labia and suturing to narrow the vaginal opening, leaving only a small hole for the passage of urine and menstrual fluid Anthropologists working in regions where such practices are common often understandably have a strong negative opinion, viewing the practice as unnecessary medically and posing a risk of serious infection, infertility, and complications from childbirth. They may also be opposed to it because they feel that it violates the right of women to experience sexual pleasure, something they likely view as a fundamental human right. Should the anthropologist intervene to prevent girls and women from being subjected to this practice?

Anthropologist Janice Boddy studied FGC/FGM in rural northern Sudan and sought to explain it from a culturally relativistic perspective. She found that the practice persists, in part, because it is believed to preserve a woman's chastity and curb her sexual desire, making her less likely to have affairs once she is married. Boddy's research showed how the practice makes sense in the context of a culture in which a woman's sexual conduct is a symbol of her family's honor, which is important culturally.[7]

Boddy's relativistic explanation helps make the practice comprehensible and allows cultural outsiders to understand how it is internally culturally coherent. But the question remains. Once anthropologists understand why people practice FGC/FGM, should they accept it? Because they uncover the cultural meaning of a practice, must they maintain a neutral stance or should they fight a practice viewed as an injustice? How does an anthropologist know what is right?

Unfortunately, answers to these questions are rarely simple, and anthropologists as a group do not always agree on an appropriate professional stance and responsibility. Nevertheless, examining practices such as FGC/FGM can help us understand the debate over

7. [8]

8. [5]

objectivity versus "activism" in anthropology more clearly. Some anthropologists feel that striving for objectivity in ethnography is paramount. That even if objectivity cannot be completely achieved, anthropologists' ethnography should be free from as much subjective opinion as possible. Others take the opposite stance and produce anthropological research and writing as a means of fighting for equality and justice for disempowered or voiceless groups. The debate over how much (if any) activism is acceptable is ongoing. What is clear is that anthropologists are continuing to grapple with the contentious relationship between objectivity and activism in ethnographic research.

Science and Humanism

Anthropologists have described their field as the most humanistic of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities. Early anthropologists fought to legitimize anthropology as a robust scientific field of study. To do so, they borrowed methods and techniques from the physical sciences and applied them to anthropological inquiry. Indeed, anthropology today is categorized as a social science in most academic institutions in Canada alongside sociology, psychology, economics, and political science. However, in recent decades, many cultural anthropologists have distanced themselves from science-oriented research and embraced more-humanistic approaches, including symbolic and interpretive perspectives. Interpretive anthropology treats culture as a body of "texts" rather than attempting to test a hypothesis based on deductive or inductive reasoning. The texts present a particular picture from a particular subjective point of view. Interpretive anthropologists believe that it is not necessary (or even possible) to objectively interrogate a text. Rather, they study the texts to untangle the various webs of meaning embedded in them. Consequently, interpretive anthropologists include the context of

their interpretations, their own perspectives and, importantly, how the research participants view themselves and the meanings they attribute to their lives.

Anthropologists are unlikely to conclude that a single approach is best. Instead, anthropologists can apply any and all of the approaches that best suit their particular problem. Anthropology is unique among academic disciplines for the diversity of approaches used to conduct research and for the broad range of orientations that fall under its umbrella.

Observation and Participant Observation

Of the various techniques and tools used to conduct ethnographic research, observation in general and participant observation in particular are among the most important. Ethnographers are trained to pay attention to everything happening around them when in the field—from routine daily activities such as cooking dinner to major events such as an annual religious celebration. They observe how people interact with each other, how the environment affects people, and how people affect the environment. It is essential for anthropologists to rigorously document their observations, usually by writing field notes and recording their feelings and perceptions in a personal journal or diary.

As previously mentioned, participant observation involves ethnographers observing while they participate in activities with their informants. This technique is important because it allows the researcher to better understand why people do what they do from an emic perspective. Malinowski noted that participant observation is an important tool by which "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize *his* vision of *his* world."[9]

9. [10]

To conduct participant observation, ethnographers must live with or spend considerable time with their informants to establish a strong rapport with them. Rapport is a sense of trust and a comfortable working relationship in which the informant and the ethnographer are at ease with each other and agreeable to working together.

Participant observation was an important part of my own research. In 2003, I spent six months living in two Mayan villages in highland Chiapas, Mexico. I was conducting ethnographic research on behalf of the Science Museum of Minnesota to document changes in *huipil* textile designs. *Huipiles* (pronounced "we-peel-ayes") are a type of hand-woven blouse that Mayan women in the region weave and wear, and every town has its own style and designs. At a large city market, one can easily identify the town each weaver is from by the colors and designs of her *huipiles*. For hundreds of years, *huipil* designs changed very little. Then, starting around 1960, the designs and colors of *huipiles* in some of the towns began to change rapidly. I was interested in learning why some towns' designs were changing more rapidly than other towns' were and in collecting examples of *huipiles* to supplement the museum's existing collection.

I spent time in two towns, Zinacantán and San Andrés Larráinzar. Zinacantán was located near the main city, San Cristóbal de las Casas. It received many tourists each year and had regularly established bus and van routes that locals used to travel to San Cristóbal to buy food and other goods. Some of the men in the town had worked in the United States and returned with money to build or improve their family homes and businesses. Other families were supported by remittances from relatives working in the United States or in other parts of Mexico. San Andrés, on the other hand, was relatively isolated and much further from San Cristóbal. Most families there relied on subsistence farming or intermittent

10. [6]

agricultural labor and had limited access to tourism or to outside communities. San Andrés was also the site of a major indigenous revolt in the mid-1990s that resulted in greater autonomy, recognition, and rights for indigenous groups throughout Mexico. Politically and socially, it was a progressive community in many ways but remained conservative in others.

I first asked people in Zinacantán why their *huipil* designs, motifs, and colors seemed to change almost every year. Many women said that they did not know. Others stated that weaving was easy and could be boring so they liked to make changes to keep the *huipiles* interesting and to keep weaving from getting dull. When I asked people in San Andrés what they thought about what the women in Zinacantán had said, the San Andrés women replied that "Yes, perhaps they do get bored easily. But we in San Andrés are superior weavers and we don't need to change our designs." Neither response seemed like the full story behind the difference.

Though I spent hundreds of hours observing women preparing to weave, weaving, and selling their textiles to tourists, I did not truly understand what the women were telling me until I tried weaving myself. When I watched them, the process seemed so easy and simple. They attached strings of thread vertically to two ends of the back-strap looms. When weaving, they increased and decreased the tension on the vertical threads by leaning backward and forward with the back strap and teased individual threads horizontally through the vertical threads to create the desired pattern. After each thread was placed, they pushed it down with great force using a smooth, flat wooden trowel. They did the entire process with great ease and fluidity. When I only watched and did not participate, I could believe the Zinacantán women when they told me weaving was easy.

When I began to weave, it took me several days simply to learn how to sit correctly with a back-strap loom and achieve the appropriate tension. I failed repeatedly at setting up the loom with vertically strung threads and never got close to being able to create a design. Thus, I learned through participant observation that

weaving is an exceptionally difficult task. Even expert weavers who had decades of experience sometimes made mistakes as half-finished weavings and rejected textiles littered many homes. Although the women appeared to be able to multi-task while weaving (stoking the fire, calling after small children, cooking food), weaving still required a great deal of concentration to do well.

Through participant observation, I was able to recognize that other factors likely drove the changes in their textiles. I ultimately concluded that the rate of change in *huipil* design in Zinacantán was likely related to the pace of cultural change broadly in the community resulting from interactions between its residents and tourists and relatively frequent travel to a more-urban environment. Participant observation was an important tool in my research and is central to most ethnographic studies today.

Conversations and Interviews

Another primary technique for gathering ethnographic data is simply talking with people—from casual, unstructured conversations about ordinary topics to formal scheduled interviews about a particular topic. An important element for successful conversations and interviews is establishing rapport with informants. Sometimes, engaging in conversation is part of establishing that rapport. Ethnographers frequently use multiple forms of conversation and interviewing for a single research project based on their particular needs. They sometimes record the conversations and interviews with an audio recording device but more often they simply engage in the conversation and then later write down everything they recall about it. Conversations and interviews are an essential part of most ethnographic research designs because spoken communication is central to humans' experiences.

Gathering Life Histories

Collecting a personal narrative of someone's life is a valuable ethnographic technique and is often combined with other techniques. Life histories provide the context in which culture is experienced and created by individuals and describe how individuals have reacted, responded, and contributed to changes that occurred during their lives. They also help anthropologists be more aware of what makes life meaningful to an individual and to focus on the particulars of individual lives, on the tenor of their experiences and the patterns that are important to them. Researchers often include life histories in their ethnographic texts as a way of intimately connecting the reader to the lives of the informants.

The Genealogical Method

The genealogical (kinship) method has a long tradition in ethnography. Developed in the early years of anthropological research to document the family systems of tribal groups, it is still used today to discover connections of kinship, descent, marriage, and the overall social system. Because kinship and genealogy are so important in many nonindustrial societies, the technique is used to collect data on important relationships that form the foundation of the society and to trace social relationships more broadly in communities.

When used by anthropologists, the genealogical method involves using symbols and diagrams to document relationships. Circles represent women and girls, triangles represent men and boys, and squares represent ambiguous or unknown gender. Equal signs between individuals represent their union or marriage and vertical lines descending from a union represent parent-child relationships.

The death of an individual and the termination of a marriage are denoted by diagonal lines drawn across the shapes and equal signs. Kinship charts are diagramed from the perspective of one person who is called the Ego, and all of the relationships in the chart are based on how the others are related to the Ego. Individuals in a chart are sometimes identified by numbers or names, and an accompanying list provides more-detailed information.

Key Informants

Within any culture or subculture, there are always particular individuals who are more knowledgeable about the culture than others and who may have more-detailed or privileged knowledge. Anthropologists conducting ethnographic research in the field often seek out such cultural specialists to gain a greater understanding of certain issues and to answer questions they otherwise could not answer. When an anthropologist establishes a rapport with these individuals and begins to rely more on them for information than on others, the cultural specialists are referred to as key informants or key cultural consultants.

Key informants can be exceptional assets in the field, allowing the ethnographer to uncover the meanings of behaviors and practices the researcher cannot otherwise understand. Key informants can also help researchers by directly observing others and reporting those observations to the researchers, especially in situations in which the researcher is not allowed to be present or when the researcher's presence could alter the participants' behavior. In addition, ethnographers can check information they obtained from other informants, contextualize it, and review it for accuracy. Having a key informant in the field is like having a research ally. The relationship can grow and become enormously fruitful.

A famous example of the central role that key informants can play in an ethnographer's research is a man named Doc in William

Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1943). In the late 1930s, Whyte studied social relations between street gangs and "corner boys" in a Boston urban slum inhabited by first- and second-generation Italian immigrants. A social worker introduced Whyte to Doc and the two hit it off. Doc proved instrumental to the success of Whyte's research. He introduced Whyte to his family and social group and vouched for him in the tight-knit community, providing access that Whyte could not have gained otherwise.

Field Notes

Field notes are indispensable when conducting ethnographic research. Although making such notes is time-consuming, they form the primary record of one's observations. Generally speaking, ethnographers write two kinds of notes: field notes and personal reflections. Field notes are detailed descriptions of everything the ethnographer observes and experiences. They include specific details about what happened at the field site, the ethnographer's sensory impressions, and specific words and phrases used by the people observed. They also frequently include the content of conversations the ethnographer had and things the ethnographer overheard others say. Ethnographers also sometimes include their personal reflections on the experience of writing field notes. Often, brief notes are jotted down in a notebook while the anthropologist is observing and participating in activities. Later, they expand on those quick notes to make more formal field notes, which may be organized and typed into a report. It is common for ethnographers to spend several hours a day writing and organizing field notes.

Ethnographers often also keep a personal journal or diary that may include information about their emotions and personal experiences while conducting research. These personal reflections can be as important as the field notes. Ethnography is not an objective science. Everything researchers do and experience in the

field is filtered through their personal life experiences. Two ethnographers may experience a situation in the field in different ways and understand the experience differently. For this reason, it is important for researchers to be aware of their reactions to situations and be mindful of how their life experiences affect their perceptions. In fact, this sort of reflexive insight can turn out to be a useful data source and analytical tool that improves the researcher's understanding.

The work of anthropologist Renato Rosaldo provides a useful example of how anthropologists can use their emotional responses to fieldwork situations to advance their research. In 1981, Rosaldo and his wife, Michelle, were conducting research among the Ilongots of Northern Luzon in the Philippines. Rosaldo was studying men in the community who engaged in emotional rampages in which they violently murdered others by cutting off their heads. Although the practice had been banned by the time Rosaldo arrived, a longing to continue headhunting remained in the cultural psyche of the community.

Whenever Rosaldo asked a man why he engaged in headhunting, the answer was that rage and grief caused him to kill others. At the beginning of his fieldwork, Rosaldo felt that the response was overly simplistic and assumed that there had to be more to it than that. He was frustrated because he could not uncover a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Then, on October 11, 1981, Rosaldo's wife was walking along a ravine when she tripped, lost her footing, and fell 65 feet to her death, leaving Rosaldo a grieving single father. In his essay "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage," Rosaldo later wrote that it was his own struggle with rage as he grieved for his wife that helped him truly grasp what the Ilongot men meant when they described their grief and rage. Only through the very personal and emotionally devastating experience of losing his wife was Rosaldo able to understand the emic perspective of the headhunters. The result was an influential and insightful ethnographic account.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical Guidelines

From the earliest days of anthropology as a discipline, concern about the ethical treatment of people who take part in studies has been an important consideration. Ethical matters are central to any research project and anthropologists take their ethical responsibilities particularly seriously. As discussed throughout this chapter, anthropologists are oriented toward developing empathy for their informants and understanding their cultures and experiences from an emic perspective. Many also have a sense of personal responsibility for the well-being of the local people with whom they work in the field.

The American Anthropological Association has developed a Code of Ethics that all anthropologists should follow in their work. Among the many ethical responsibilities outlined in the code, doing no harm, obtaining informed consent, maintaining subjects' anonymity, and making the results of the research accessible are especially important responsibilities.

Do No Harm

First and foremost, anthropologists must ensure that their involvement with a community does not harm or embarrass their informants. Researchers must carefully consider any potential harm associated with the research, including legal, emotional, political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions, and take steps to insulate their informants from such harm. Since it is not always possible to anticipate every potential repercussion at the outset,

anthropologists also must continually monitor their work to ensure that their research design and methods minimize any risk.

Regrettably, the proscription to do no harm is a deceptively complex requirement. Despite their best efforts, anthropologists have run into ethical problems in the field. Work by Napoleon Chagnon among an isolated indigenous tribe of the Amazon, the Yonomami, is a well-known example of ethical problems in anthropological research. In his groundbreaking ethnography *Yanomamö: The Fierce People* (1968), Chagnon portrayed the Yanomami as an intensely violent and antagonistic people. The ethnography was well received initially. However, not long after its publication, controversy erupted. Anthropologists and other scholars have accused Chagnon of encouraging the violence he documented, staging fights and scenes for documentary films and fabricating data.

Today, Do No Harm is a central ethical value in anthropology. However, it can be difficult to predict every challenge one may encounter in the field or after the work is published. Anthropologists must continually reevaluate their research and writing to ensure that it does not harm the informants or their communities. Before fieldwork begins, researchers from universities, colleges, and institutions usually must submit their research agendas to an institutional review board (IRB). IRBs review research plans to ensure that the proposed studies will not harm human subjects. In many cases, the IRB is aware of the unique challenges and promise of anthropological research and can guide the researcher in eliminating or mitigating potential ethical problems.

Obtain Informed Consent

In addition to taking care to do no harm, anthropologists must obtain informed consent from all of their informants before

conducting any research. Informed consent is the informant's agreement to take part in the study. Originally developed in the context of medical and psychological research, this ethical guideline is also relevant to anthropology. Informants must be aware of who the anthropologist is and the research topic, who is financially and otherwise supporting the research, how the research will be used, and who will have access to it. Finally, their participation must be *optional* and not coerced. They should be able to stop participating at any time and be aware of and comfortable with any risks associated with their participation.

In medical and psychological research settings in the United States, researchers typically obtain informed consent by asking prospective participants to sign a document that outlines the research and the risks involved in their participation, acknowledging that they agree to take part. In some anthropological contexts, however, this type of informed consent may not be appropriate. People may not trust the state, bureaucratic processes, or authority, for example. Asking them to sign a formal legal-looking document may intimidate them. Likewise, informed consent cannot be obtained with a signed document if many in the community cannot read. The anthropologist must determine the most appropriate way to obtain informed consent in the context of the particular research setting.

Maintain Anonymity and Privacy

Another important ethical consideration for anthropologists in the field is ensuring the anonymity and privacy of informants who need such protection. When I did research among undocumented Mexican immigrant college students, I recognized that my informants' legal status put them at considerable risk. I took care to use pseudonyms for all of the informants, even when writing field notes. In my writing, I changed the names of the informants'

relatives, friends, schools, and work places to protect them from being identified. Maintaining privacy and anonymity is an important way for anthropologists to ensure that their involvement does no harm.

Make Results Accessible

Finally, anthropologists must always make their final research results accessible to their informants and to other researchers. For informants, a written report in the researcher's native language may not be the best way to convey the results. Reports can be translated or the results can be converted into a more accessible format. Examples of creative ways in which anthropologists have made their results available include establishing accessible databases for their research data, contributing to existing databases, producing films that portray the results, and developing texts or recommendations that provide tangible assistance to the informants' communities. Though it is not always easy to make research results accessible in culturally appropriate ways, it is essential that others have the opportunity to review and benefit from the research, especially those who participated in its creation.

WRITING ETHNOGRAPHY

Analysis and Interpretation of Research Findings

Once all or most of the fieldwork is complete, ethnographers analyze their data and research findings before beginning to write. There are many techniques for data analysis from which to choose

based on the strategy and goals of the research. Regardless of the particular technique, data analysis involves a systematic interpretation of what the researcher thinks the data mean. The ethnographer reviews all of the data collected, synthesizes findings from the review, and integrates those findings with prior studies on the topic. Once the analysis is complete, the ethnographer is ready to write an account of the fieldwork.

Ethnographic Authority

In recent years, anthropologists have expressed concern about how ethnographies should be written in terms of ethnographic authority: how ethnographers present themselves and their informants in text. In a nonfiction text, the author is a mediator between readers and the topic and the text is written to help readers understand an unfamiliar topic. In an ethnography, the topic is people, and people naturally vary in terms of their thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and perspectives. That is, they have individual voices. In the past, anthropologists commonly wrote ethnographic accounts as if they possessed the ultimate most complete scientific knowledge on the topic. Subsequently, anthropologists began to challenge that writing style, particularly when it did not include the voices of their informants in the text and analysis. Some of this criticism originated with feminist anthropologists who noted that women's experiences and perspectives frequently were omitted and misrepresented in this style of writing. Others believed that this style of writing reinforced existing global power dynamics and privileges afforded to Western anthropologists' voices as most important.

Polyvocality

In response to criticisms about ethnographic authority, anthropologists have begun to include polyvocality. A polyvocal text is one in which more than one person's voice is presented, and its use can range from ensuring that informants' perspectives are presented in the text while still writing in the researcher's voice to including informants' actual words rather than paraphrasing them and co-authoring the ethnography with an informant. A good example of polyvocality is anthropologist Ruth Behar's book *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story* (1993). Behar's book documents the life story of a Mexican street peddler, Esperanza Hernández, and their unique friendship. Large sections of the book are in Esperanza's own words and discuss issues that are important to her. Behar also includes pieces of her own life story and an anthropological analysis of Esperanza's story.

By using polyvocality, researchers can avoid writing from the perspective of the ultimate ethnographic authority. A polyvocal style also allows readers to be more involved in the text since they have the opportunity to form their own opinions about the ethnographic data and perhaps even critique the author's analysis. It also encourages anthropologists to be more transparent when presenting their methods and data.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is another relatively new approach to ethnographic research and writing. Beginning in the 1960s, social science researchers began to think more carefully about the effects of their life experiences, status, and roles on their research and analyses. They began to insert themselves into their texts, including information about their personal experiences, thoughts, and life

stories and to analyze in the accounts how those characteristics affected their research and analysis.

Adoption of reflexivity is perhaps the most significant change in how ethnography is researched and written in the past 50 years. It calls on anthropologists to acknowledge that they are part of the world they study and thus can never truly be objective. Reflexivity has also contributed to anthropologists' appreciation of the unequal power dynamics of research and the effects those dynamics can have on the results. Reflexivity reminds the ethnographer that there are multiple ways to interpret any given cultural scenario. By acknowledging how their backgrounds affect their interpretations, anthropologists can begin to remove themselves from the throne of ethnographic authority and allow other, less-empowered voices to be heard.

5. Argonauts of the Western Pacific (Prefaces and Table of Contents)

Argonauts of the Western Pacific (1922)

Bronislaw Malinowski

PREFACE BY SIR JAMES G. FRAZER

My esteemed friend, Dr. B. Malinowski has asked me to write a preface to his book, and I willingly comply with his request, though I can hardly think that any words of mine will add to the value of the remarkable record of anthropological research which he has given us in this volume. My observations, such as they are, will deal partly with the writer's method and partly with the matter of his book.

In regard to method, Dr. Malinowski has done his work, as it appears to me, under the best conditions and in the manner calculated to secure the best possible results. Both by theoretical training and by practical experience he was well equipped for the task which he undertook. Of his theoretical training he had given proof in his learned and thoughtful treatise on the family among the aborigines of Australia [1]; of his practical experience he had

1. treatise on the family among the aborigines of Australia

produced no less satisfactory evidence in his account of the natives of Mailu in New Guinea[2], based on a residence of six months among them. In the Trobriand Islands, to the east of New Guinea, to which he next turned his attention, Dr. Malinowski lived as a native among the natives for many months together, watching them daily at work and at play, conversing with them in their own tongue, and deriving all his information from the surest sources — personal observation and statements made to him directly by the natives in their own language without the intervention of an interpreter. In this way he has accumulated a large mass of materials, of high scientific value, bearing on the social, religious, and economic or industrial life of the Trobriand Islanders. These he hopes and intends to publish hereafter in full; meantime he has given us in the present volume a preliminary study of an interesting and peculiar feature in Trobriand society, the remarkable system of exchange, only in part economic or commercial, which the islanders maintain among themselves and with the inhabitants of neighbouring islands.

Little reflection is needed to convince us of the fundamental importance of economic forces at all stages of man's career from the humblest to the highest. After all, the human species is part of the animal creation, and as such, like the rest of the animals, it reposes on a material foundation; on which a higher life, intellectual, moral, social, may be built, but without which no such superstructure

— The Family among the Australian Aborigines: A Sociological Study. London University of London Press, 1913.

2. account of the natives of Mailu in New Guinea — The Natives of Mailu Preliminary Results of the Robert Mond Research Work in British New Guinea. "Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia", vol. xxxix., 1915.

is possible. That material foundation, consisting in the necessity of food and of a certain degree of warmth and shelter from the elements, forms the economic or industrial basis and prime condition of human life. If anthropologists have hitherto unduly neglected it, we may suppose that it was rather because they were attracted to the higher side of man's nature than because they deliberately ignored and undervalued the importance and indeed necessity of the lower. In excuse for their neglect we may also remember that anthropology is still a young science, and that the multitude of problems which await the student cannot all be attacked at once, but must be grappled with one by one. Be that as it may, Dr. Malinowski has done well to emphasise the great significance of primitive economics by singling out the notable exchange system of the Trobriand Islanders for special consideration.

Further, he has wisely refused to limit himself to a mere description of the processes of the exchange, and has set himself to penetrate the motives which underlie it and the feelings which it excites in the minds of the natives. It appears to be sometimes held that pure sociology should confine itself to the description of acts and should leave the problems of motives and feelings to psychology. Doubtless it is true that the analysis of motives and feelings is logically distinguishable from the description of acts, and that it falls, strictly speaking, within the sphere of psychology; but in practice an act has no meaning for an observer unless he knows or infers the thoughts and emotions of the agent; hence to describe a series of acts, without any reference to the state of mind of the agent, would not answer the purpose of sociology, the aim of which is not merely to register but to understand the actions of men in society. Thus sociology cannot fulfil its task without calling in at every turn the aid of psychology.

It is characteristic of Dr. Malinowski's method that he takes full account of the complexity of human nature. He sees man, so to say, in the round and not in the flat. He remembers that man is a creature of emotion at least as much as of reason, and he is

constantly at pains to discover the emootional as well as the rational basis of human action. The man of science, like the man of letters, is too apt to view mankind only in the abstract, selecting for his consideration a single side of our complex and many- -sided being. Of this one-sided treatment Molière is a conspicuous example among great writers. All his characters are seen only in the flat: one of them is a miser, another a hypocrite, another a coxcomb, and so on; but not one of them is a man. All are dummies dressed up to look very like human beings; but the likeness is only on the surface, all within is hollow and empty, because truth to nature has been sacrificed to literary effect. Very different is the presentation of human nature in the greater artists, such as Cervantes and Shakespeare: their characters are solid, being drawn not from one side only but from many. No doubt in science a certain abstractness of treatment is not merely legitimate, but necessary, since science is nothing but knowledge raised to the highest power, and all knowledge implies a process of abstraction and generalisation: even the recognition of an individual whom we see every day is only possible as the result of an abstract idea of him formed by generalisation from his appearances in the past. Thus the science of man is forced to abstract certain aspects of human nature and to consider them apart from the concrete reality; or ratter it falls into a number of sciences, each of which considers a single part of man's complex organism, it may be the physical, the intellectual, the moral, or the social side of his being; and the general conclusions which it draws will present a more or less incomplete picture of man as a whole, because the lines which compose it are necessarily but a few picked out of a multitude.

In the present treatise Dr. Malinowski is mainly concerned with what at first sight might seem a purely economic activity of the Trobriand Islanders; but, with his usual width of outlook and fineness of perception, he is careful to point out that the curious circulation of valuables, which takes place between the inhabitants of the Trobriand and other islands, while it is accompanied by ordinary trade, is by no means itself a purely commercial

transaction; he shows that it is not based on a simple calculation of utility, of profit and loss, but that it satisfies emotional and aesthetic needs of a higher order than the mere gratification of animal wants. This leads Dr. Malinowski to pass some severe strictures on the conception of the Primitive Economic Man as a kind of bogey who, it appears, still haunts economic text-books and even extends his blighting influence to the minds of certain anthropologists. Rigged out in cast-off garments of Mr. Jeremy Bentham and Mr. Gradgrind, this horrible phantom is apparently actuated by no other motive than that of filthy lucre, which he pursues relentlessly, on Spencerian principles, along the line of least resistance. If such a dismal fiction is really regarded by serious inquirers as having any counterpart in savage society, and not simply as a useful abstraction, Dr. Malinowski's account of the *Kula* in this book should help to lay the phantom by the heels; for he proves that the trade in useful objects, which forms part of the *Kula* system, is in the minds of the natives entirely subordinate in importance to the exchange of other objects, which serve no utilitarian purpose whatever. In its combination of commercial enterprise, social organisation, mythical background, and magical ritual, to say nothing of the wide geographical range of its operations, this singular institution appears to have no exact parallel in the existing anthropological record; but its discoverer, Dr. Malinowski, may very well be right in surmising that it is probably a type of institution of which analogous, if not precisely similar, instances will hereafter be brought to light by further research among savage and barbarous peoples.

Not the least interesting and instructive feature of the *Kula*, as it is described for us by Dr. Malinowski, is the extremely important part which magic is seen to play in the institution. From his description it appears that in the minds of the natives the performance of magical rites and the utterance of magical words are indispensable for the success of the enterprise in all its phases, from the felling of the trees out of which the canoes are to be hollowed, down to the moment when, the expedition successfully accomplished, the

argosy with its precious cargo is about to start on its homeward voyage. And incidentally we learn that magical ceremonies and spells are deemed no less necessary for the cultivation of gardens and for success in fishing, the two forms of industrial enterprise which furnish the islanders with their principal means of support; hence the garden magician, whose business it is to promote the growth of the garden produce by his hocus-pocus, is one of the most important men in the village, ranking next after the chief and the sorcerer. In short, magic is believed to be an absolutely essential adjunct of every industrial undertaking, being just as requisite for its success as the mechanical operations involved in it, such as the caulking, painting and launching of a canoe, the planting of a garden, and the setting of a fish-trap. "A belief in magic", says Dr. Malinowski, "is one of the main psychological forces which allow for organisation and systematisation of economic effort in the Trobriands".

This valuable account of magic as a factor of fundamental economic importance for the welfare and indeed for the very existence of the community should suffice to dispel the erroneous view that magic, as opposed to religion, is in its nature essentially maleficent and anti-social, being always used by an individual for the promotion of his own selfish ends and the injury of his enemies, quite regardless of its effect on the common weal. No doubt magic may be so employed, and has in fact probably been so employed, in every part of the world; in the Trobriand Islands themselves it is believed to be similarly practised for nefarious purposes by sorcerers, who inspire the natives with the deepest dread and the most constant concern. But in itself magic is neither beneficent nor maleficent; it is simply an imaginary power of controlling the forces of nature, and this control may be exercised by the magician for good or evil, for the benefit or injury of individuals and of the community. In this respect, magic is exactly on the same footing with the sciences, of which it is the bastard sister. They, too, in themselves, are neither good nor evil, though they become the source of one or other according to their application. It would be

absurd, for example, to stigmatise pharmacy as antisocial, because a knowledge of the properties of drugs is often employed to destroy men as well as to heal them. It is equally absurd to neglect the beneficent application of magic and to single out its maleficent use as the characteristic property by which to define it. The processes of nature, over which science exercises a real and magic an imaginary control, are not affected by the moral disposition, the good or bad intention, of the individual who uses his knowledge to set them in motion. The action of drugs on the human body is precisely the same whether they are administered by a physician or by a poisoner. Nature and her handmaid Science are neither friendly nor hostile to morality; they are simply indifferent to it and equally ready to do the bidding of the saint and of the sinner, provided only that he gives them the proper word of command. If the guns are well loaded and well aimed, the fire of the battery will be equally destructive, whether the gunners are patriots fighting in defence of their country or invaders waging a war of unjust aggression. The fallacy of differentiating a science or an art according to its application and the moral intention of the agent is obvious enough with regard to pharmacy and artillery; it is equally real, though to many people apparently it is less obvious, with regard to magic.

The immense influence wielded by magic over the whole life and thought of the Trobriand Islanders is perhaps the feature of Dr. Malinowski's book which makes the most abiding impression on the mind of the reader. He tells us that "magic, the attempt of man to govern the forces of nature directly by means of a special lore, is all-pervading and all-important in the Trobriands"; it is "interwoven into all the many industrial and communal activities"; "all the data which have been so far mustered disclose the extreme importance of magic in the *Kula*. But if it were a questions of treating of any other aspect of the tribal life of these natives, it would also be found that, whenever they approach any concern of vital importance, they summon magic to their aid. It can be said without exaggeration that magic, according to their ideas, governs human destinies; that it supplies man with the power of mastering the forces of nature; and

that it is his weapon and armour against the many dangers which crowd in upon him on every side". Thus in the view of the Trobriand Islanders, magic is a power of supreme importance either for good or evil; it can make or mar the life of man; it can sustain and protect the individual and the community, or it can injure and destroy them. Compared to this universal and deep-rooted conviction, the belief in the existence of the spirits of the dead would seem to exercise but little influence on the life of these people. Contrary to the general attitude of savages towards the souls of the departed, they are reported to be almost completely devoid of any fear of ghosts. They believe, indeed, that the ghosts return to their villages once a year to partake of the great annual feast; but "in general the spirits do not influence human beings very much, for better or worse"; "there is nothing of the mutual interaction, of the intimate collaboration between man and spirit which are the essence of religious cult. This conspicuous predominance of magic over religion, at least over the worship of the dead, is a very notable feature in the culture of a people so comparatively high in the scale of savagery as the Trobriand Islanders. It furnishes a fresh proof of the extraordinary strength and tenacity of the hold which this world-wide delusion has had, and still has, upon the human mind.

We shall doubtless learn much as to the relation of magic and religion among the Trobrianders from the full report of Dr. Malinowski's researches in the islands. From the patient observation which he has devoted to a single institution, and from the wealth of details with which he has illustrated it, we may judge of the extent and value of the larger work which he has in preparation. It promises to be one of the completest and most scientific accounts ever given of a savage people.

J.G. Frazer.

The Temple, London, 7th March, 1922.

FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR

Ethnology is in the sadly ludicrous, not to say tragic, position, that at the very moment when it begins to put its workshop in order, to forge its proper tools, to start ready for work on its appointed task, the material of its study melts away with hopeless rapidity. Just now, when the methods and aims of scientific field ethnology have taken shape, when men fully trained for the work have begun to travel into savage countries and study their inhabitants — these die away under our very eyes.

The research which has been done on native races by men of academic training has proved beyond doubt and cavil that scientific, methodic inquiry can give us results far more abundant and of better quality than those of even the best amateur's work. Most, though not all, of the modern scientific accounts have opened up quite new and unexpected aspects of tribal life. They have given us, in clear outline, the picture of social institutions often surprisingly vast and complex; they have brought before us the vision of the native as he is, in his religious and magical beliefs and practices. They have allowed us to penetrate into his mind far more deeply than we have ever done before. From this new material, scientifically hall-marked, students of comparative Ethnology have already drawn some very important conclusions on the origin of human customs, beliefs institutions; on the history of cultures, and their spread and contact; on the laws of human behaviour in society, and of the human mind.

The hope of gaining a new vision of savage humanity through the labours of scientific specialists open out like a mirage, vanishing almost as soon as perceived. For though at present, there is still a large number of native communities available for scientific study, within a generation or two, they or their cultures will have practically disappeared. The need for energetic work is urgent, and the time is short. Nor, alas, up to the present, has any adequate interest been taken by the public in these studies. The number

of workers is small, the encouragement they receive scanty. I feel therefore no need to justify an ethnological contribution which is the result of specialised research in the field.

In this volume I give an account of one phase of savage life only, in describing certain forms of inter-tribal, trading relations among the natives of New Guinea. This account has been culled, as a preliminary monograph, from Ethnographic material, covering the whole extent of the tribal culture of one district. One of the first conditions of acceptable Ethnographic work certainly is that it should deal with the totality of all social, cultural and psychological aspects of the community, for they are so interwoven that not one can be understood without taking into consideration all the others. The reader of this monograph will clearly see that, though its main theme is economic — for it deals with commercial enterprise, exchange and trade — constant reference has to be made to social organisation, the power of magic, to mythology and folklore, and indeed to all other aspects as well as the main one.

The geographical area of which the book treats is limited to the Archipelagoes lying off the eastern end of New Guinea. Even within this, the main field of research was in one district, that of the Trobriand Islands. This, however, has been studied minutely. I have lived in that one archipelago for about two years, in the course of three expeditions to New Guinea, during which time I naturally acquired a thorough knowledge of the language. I did my work entirely alone, living for the greater part of the time right in the villages. I therefore had constantly the daily life of the natives before my eyes, while accidental, dramatic occurrences, deaths, quarrels, village brawls, public and ceremonial events, could not escape my notice.

In the present state of Ethnography, when so much has still to be done in paving the way for forthcoming research and in fixing its scope, each new contribution ought to justify its appearance in several points. It ought to show some advance in method; it ought to push research beyond its previous limits in depth, in width, or in both; finally, it ought to endeavour to present its results in a manner

exact, but not dry. The specialist interested in method, in reading this work, will find set out in the Introduction, Divisions II-IX and in Chapter XVIII, the exposition of my points of view and efforts in this direction. The reader who is concerned with results, rather than with the way of obtaining them, will find in Chapters IV to XXI a consecutive narrative of the Kula expeditions, and the various associated customs and beliefs. The student who is interested, not only in the narrative, but in the ethnographic background for it, and a clear definition of the institution, will find the first in Chapters I and II, and the latter in Chapter III.

To Mr. Robert Mond I tender my sincerest thanks. It is to his generous endowment that I owe the possibility of carrying on for several years the research of which the present volume is a partial result. To Mr. Atlee Hunt, C. M. G., Secretary of the Home and Territories Department of the Commonwealth of Australia, I am indebted for the financial assistance of the Department, and also for much help given on the spot. In the Trobriands, I was immensely helped in my work by Mr. B. Hancock, pearl trader, to whom I am grateful not only for assistance and services, but for many acts of friendship.

Much of the argument in this book has been greatly improved by the criticism given me by my friend, Mr. Paul Khuner, of Vienna, an expert in the practical affairs of modern industry and a highly competent thinker on economic matters. Professor L. T. Hobhouse has kindly read the proofs and given me valuable advice on several points.

Sir James Frazer, by writing his Preface, has enhanced the value of this volume beyond its merit and it is not only a great honour and advantage for me to be introduced by him, but also a special pleasure, for my first love for ethnology is associated with the reading of the Golden Bough, then in its second edition.

Last, not least, I wish to mention Professor C. G. Seligman, to whom this book is dedicated. The initiative of my expedition was given by him and I owe him more than I can express for the

encouragement and scientific counsel which he has so generously given me during the progress of my work in New Guinea.

B. M.

El Boquin, Icod de los Vivos, Tenerife. April, 1921

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: The subject, method and scope of this enquiry

I — Sailing, and trading in the South Seas; the *Kula.*

II — Method in Ethnography.

III — Starting field work. Some perplexing difficulties. Three conditions of success.

IV — Life in a tent among the natives. Mechanism of "getting in touch" with them.

V — Active methods of research. Order and consistency in savage cultures. Methodological consequences of this truth.

VI — Formulating the principles of tribal constitution and of the anatomy of culture. Method of inference from statistic accumulation of concrete data. Uses of synoptic charts.

VII — Presentation of the intimate touches of native life; of types of behaviour. Method of systematic fixing of impressions; of detailed, consecutive records. Importance of personal participation in native life.

VIII — Recording of stereotyped manners of thinking and feeling. *Corpus inscriptionum Kiriwinensium*

IX — Summary of argument. The native's vision of his world.

Chapter I. The country and inhabitants of the Kula district

I — Racial divisions in Eastern New Guinea. Seligman's classification. The Kula natives.

II — Sub-divisions of the Kula district.

III — Scenery at the Eastern end of New Guinea. Villages of the S. Massim; their customs and social institutions.

IV — The d'Entrecasteaux Archipelago. The tribes of Dobu. The

mythological associations of their country. Some of their customs and institutions. Sorcery. A vision on Sarubwoyna beach.

V — Sailing North. The Amphlett Group. Savage monopolists.

Chapter II. The natives of the Trobriand Islands

I — Arrival in the coral Islands. First impression of the native. Some significant appearances and their deeper meaning.

II — Position of women; their life and conduct before and after marriage.

III — Further exploration in the villages. A cross country walk. Gardens and gardening.

IV — The native's working power; their motives and incentives to work. Magic and work. A digression on Primitive Economics.

V — *Chieftainship*, power through wealth; a plutocratic community. List of the various provinces and and political divisions in the Trobriands.

VI — Totemism, the solidarity of clans and the bonds of kinship.

VII — Spirits of the dead. The overweening importance of magic. Black magic. The prowling sorcerers and the flying witches. The malevolent visitors from the South, and epidemics.

VIII — The Eastern neighbours of of the Trobrianders. The remaining districts of the Kula.

Chapter III. The essentials of the Kula

I — A concise definition of the Kula.

II — Its economic character.

III — The articles exchanged; the conception of *vaygu'a*.

IV — *The main rules and aspects of the Kula*: the sociological aspect (partnership); direction of movement; nature of Kula ownership; the differential and integral effect of these rules.

V — The act of exchange; its regulations; the light it throws on the acquisitive and "communistic" tendencies of the natives; its concrete outlines; the sollicitory gifts.

VI — *The associated activities and the secondary aspects of the Kula*: construction of canoes; subsidiary trade — their true relation to the Kula; the ceremonial, mythology and magic associated with

the Kula; the mortuary taboos and distributions, in their relation to the Kula.

Chapter IV. Canoes and sailing

I — The value and importance of a canoe to a native. Its appearance, the impressions and emotions it arouses in those who use or own it. The atmosphere of romance which surrounds it for the native.

II — Analysis of its construction, in relation to its function. The three types of canoes in the Trobriand Islands.

III–V *Sociology of a large canoe (masawa).*

III—(A) — Social organisation of labour in constructing a canoe; the division of functions; the magical regulation of work.

IV—(B) — Sociology of canoe ownership; the toli-relationship; the toliwaga, "master" or "owner" of a canoe; the four privileges and functions of a *toliwaga.*

V — (C) — The social division of functions in manning and sailing a canoe. Statistical data about the Trobriand shipping.

Chapter V. The ceremonial building of a *waga*

I — Construction of canoes as part of the Kula proceedings. Magic and mythology. The preparatory and the ceremonial stage of construction

II — *The first stage*: expelling the wood sprite *Tokway*; transport of the log; the hollowingout of the log and the associated magic.

III — *The second stage*: the inaugural rite of Kula magic; the native at grips with problems of construction; the *wayugo* creeper; the magical spell uttered over it; caulking; the three magical exorcisms.

IV — Some general remarks about the two stages of canoe-building and the concomitant magic. *Bulubwalata* (evil magic) of canoes. The ornamental prowboards. The Dobuan and the Muruwan types of overseas canoe.

Chapter VI — Launching of a canoe and ceremonial visiting tribal economics in the Trobriands

I — The procedure and magic at launching. The trial run (*tasasoria*). Account of the launching and *tasasoria* seen on the

beach of Kualukuba. Reflections on the decay of customs under European influence.

II — *Digression on the sociology of work*: organisation of labour; forms of commumal labour; payment for work.

III — The custom of ceremonial visiting (*kabigidoya*); local trade, done on such expeditions.

IV–VII *Digression on gifts, payments, and exchange.*

V — Attitude of the native towards wealth. Desire of display. Enhancement of social prestige through wealth. The motives of accumulating food stuffs. Tho *vilamalya* (magic of plenty). The handling of yams. Psychology of eating. Value of manufactured goods, psychologically analysed.

V — Motives for exchange. Giving, as satisfaction of vanity and as display of power. Fallacy of the "economically isolated individual" or "household". Absence of gain in exchange.

VI — Exchange of gifts and barter. List of gifts, payments and commercial transactions: 1. Pure gifts; 2. customary payments, repaid irregularly and without strict equivalents; 3. payments for services rendered; 4. gifts returned in strictly equivalent form; 5. exchange of material goods against privileges, titles and nonmaterial possessions; 6. ceremonial barter with deferred payment; 7. trade pure and simple.

VI — Economic duties corresponding to various social ties; table of eight classes of social relationship, characterised by definite economic obligations.

Chapter VII. The departure of an overseas expedition

Scene laid in Sinaketa. The local chiefs. Stir in the village. The social differentiation of the sailing party. Magical rites, associated with the preparing and loading of a canoe. The sulumwoya rite. The magical bundle (*lilava*). The compartments of a canoe and the *gebobo* spell. Farewells on the beach.

Chapter VIII. The first halt of the fleet on Muwa

I — The definition of an *uvalaku* (ceremonial, competitive expedition).

II — The *sagali* (ceremonial distribution) on Muwa.

III — The magic of sailing.

Chapter IX. Sailing on the sea-arm of Pilolu

I — The landscape. Mythological geography of the regions beyond.

II — *Sailing*: the winds; navigation; technique of sailing a canoe and its dangers.

III — The customs and taboos of sailing. Privileged position of certain sub-clans.

IV — The beliefs in dreadful monsters lurking in the sea.

Chapter X. The story of shipwreck

I — *The flying witches*, mulukwausi *or* yoyova: essentials of the belief; initiation and education of a yoyova (witch); secrecy surrounding this condition; manner of practising this witchcra; actual cases.

II — The flying witches at sea and in shipwreck. Other dangerous agents. The *kayga'u* magic; its modes of operation.

III — Account of the preparatory rites of *kayga'u*. Some incantations quoted.

IV — The story of ship-wreck and rescue.

V — The spell of the rescuing giant fish. The myth and the magical formula of Tokulubwaydoga.

Chapter XI. In the Amphletts — sociology of the Kula

I — Arrival in Gumasila. Example of a Kula conversation. Trobrianders on long visits in the Amphletts.

II — *Sociology of the Kula*: 1. sociological limitations to participation in the Kula; 2. relation of Partnership; 3. entering the Kula relationship; 4. participation of women in the Kula.

III — *The Natives of the Amphletts*: their industries and trade; pottery; importing the clay; technology of pot-making; commercial relations with the surrounding districts.

IV — Drift of migrations and cultural influences in this province.

Chapter XII. In Tewara and Sanaroa — mythology of the Kula

I — Sailing under the lee of Koytabu. The cannibals of the unexplored jungle. Trobriand traditions and legends about them. The history and song of Gumagabu.

II — *Myths and reality*: significance imparted to landscape by myth; line of distinction between the mythical and the actual occurrences; magical power and mythical atmosphere; the three strata of Trobriand myths.

III–V *The myths of the Kula.*

III — Survey of Kula mythology and its geographical distribution. The story of Gere'u of Muyuwa (Woodlark Island). The two stories of Tokosikuna of Digumenu and Gumasila.

IV — The Kudayuri myth of the flying canoe. Commentary and analysis of this myth. Association between the canoe and the flying witches. Mythology and the Lukuba clan.

V — The myth of Kasabwaybwayreta and the necklace Gumakarakedakeda. Comparison of these stories.

VI — Sociological analysis of the myths: influence of the Kula myths upon native outlook; myth and custom.

VII — The relation between myth and actuality restated.

VIII — The story, the natural monuments and the religious ceremonial of the mythical personalities Atu'a'ine, Aturamo'a and their sister Sinatemubadiye'i. Other rocks of similar traditional nature.

Chapter XIII. On the beach of Sarubwoyna

I — The halt on the Beach. The beauty magic. Some incantations quoted. The spell of the ta'uya (conch shell).

II — The magical onset on the Koya. Psychological analysis of this magic.

III — The *Gwara* (taboo) and the *Ka'ubana'i* spell.

Chapter XIV. The Kula in Dobu — technicalities of the exchange

I — Reception in Dobu.

II — *The main transactions of the Kula and the subsidiary gifts and exchanges*: some general reflections on the driving force of the Kula; regulations of the main transaction; *vaga* (opening gift) and *yotile* (return gift); the sollicitory gifts (*pokala*, *kwaypolu*, *kaributu*, *korotomna*); intermediary gifts (*basi*) and final clinching gift (*kudu*); the other articles sometimes exchanged in the main transaction of

the Kula (*doga*, *samakupa*, *beku*); commercial honour and ethics of the Kula.

III — The Kula proceedings in Dobu: wooing the partner; *kwoygapani* magic; the subsidiary trade; roamings of the Boyowans in the Dobu district.

Chapter XV. The journey home — the fishing and working of the kaloma shell

I — Visits made on the return trip. Some articles acquired.

II — *The* spondylus *shell fishing in Sanaroa lagoon and in home waters*: its general character and magic; the Kaloma myth; consecutive account of the technicalities, ceremonial and magic of the diving for the shell.

III — Technology, economics and sociology of the production of the discs and necklaces from the shell.

IV — *Tanarere*, display of the haul. Arrival of the party home to Sinaketa.

Chapter XVI. The return visit of the Dobuans to Sinaketa

I — *The* uvalaku (*ceremonial expedition*) from *Dobu to Southern Boyowa*: the preparations in Dobu and Sanaroa; preparations in Gumasila; the excitement, the spreading and convergence of news; arrival of the Dobuan fleet in Nabwageta.

II — Preparations in Sinaketa for the reception of the visiting party. The Dobuans arrive. The scene at Kaykuyawa point. The ceremonial reception. Speeches and gifts. The three days' soʎurn of the Dobuans in Sinaketa. Manner of living. Exchange of gifts and barter.

III — Return home. Results shown at the *tanarere*.

Chapter XVII. Magic and the Kula

I — The subject matter of Boyowan magic. Its association with all the vital activities and with the unaccountable aspects of reality.

II–V *The native conception of magic.*

II — The methods of arriving at its knowledge.

III — Native views about the original sources of magic. Its primeval character. Inadmissability to the native of spontaneous

generation in magic. Magic a power of man and not a force of nature. Magic and myth and their super-normal atmosphere.

IV — *The magical acts*: spell and rite; relation between these two factors; spells uttered directly without a concomitant rite; spells accompanied by simple rite of impregnation; spells accompanied by a rite of transference; spells accompanied by offerings and invocations; summary of this survey.

V — Place where magic is stored in the human anatomy.

VI — Condition of the performer. Taboos and observances. Sociological position. Actual descent and magical filiation.

VII — Definition of systematic magic. The "systems" of canoe magic and Kula magic.

VIII — *Supernormal or supernatural character of magic*; emotional reaction of the natives to certain forms of magic; the *kariyala* (magical portent); role of ancestral spirits; native terminology.

IX — Ceremonial setting of magic.

X — Institution of taboo, supported by magic. *Kaytubutabu and kaytapaku*. X

I — Purchase ol certain forms of magic. Payments for magical services.

XII — Brief summary.

Chapter XVIII. The power of words in magic — some linguistic data

I — Study of linguistic data in magic to throw light on native ideas about the power of words.

II — The text of the *wayugo* spell with literal translation.

III — Linguistic analysis of its *u'ula* (exordium).

IV — Vocal technique of reciting a spell. Analysis of the *tapwana* (main part) and *dogina* (final part).

V — The text of the *Sulumwoya* spell and its analysis.

VI–XII *Linguistic data referring to the other spells mentioned in this volume and some general inferences.*

VI — The *tokway* spell and the opening phrases of the canoe spells.

VII — The *tapwana* (main parts) of the canoe spells.

VIII — The end parts (*dogina*) of these spells.
IX — The u'ula of the mwasila spells. X — The tapwana and the dogina of these spells. XI — The *kayga'u* spells.
XII — Summary of the results of this linguistic survey.
XIII — Substances used in these magical rites.
XIV–XVIII Analysis of some non-magical linguistic texts, to illustrate ethnographic method and native way of thinking.
XIV — General remarks about certain aspects of method. XV — Text No. 1, its literal and free translation.
XVI — Commentary.
XVII — Texts No. 2 and 3 translated and commented upon.

Chapter XIX. The inland Kula

I — To'uluwa, the chief of Kiriwina, on a visit in Sinaketa. The decay of his power. Some melancholy reflections about the folly of destroying the native order of things and of undermining native authority as now prevailing.
II — The division into Kula communities; the three types of Kula, with respect to this division. The overseas Kula. III — The inland Kula between two "Kula communities" and within such a unit.
IV The "Kula communities" — in Boyowa (Trobriand Islands).

Chapter XX. Expeditions between Kiriwina and Kitava

I–II *Account of an expedition from Kinwina to Kitava.*
I — Fixing dates and preparing districts.
II — Preliminaries of the journey. Departure from Kaulukuba Beach. Sailing. Analogies and differences between these expeditions and those of the Sinaketans to Dobu. Entering the village. The *youlawada* custom. Sojourn in Kitava and return.
III — The *So'i* (mortuary feast) in the Eastern district (Kitava to Muyuwa) and its association with the Kula.

Chapter XXI. The remaining branches and offshoots of the Kula.

I — Rapid survey of the routes between Woodlark Island (Murua or Muyuwa) and the Engineer group and between this latter and Dobu.
II — The ordinary trade carried on between these communities.

III — An offshoot of the Kula; trading expeditions between the Western Trobriand (Kavataria and Kayleula) and the Western d'Entrecasteaux.
IV — Production of *mwali* (armshells).
V — Some other offshoots and leakages of the Kula ring. Entry of the Kula *vaygu'a* into the Ring.
Chapter XXII. The meaning of the Kula.

6. Argonauts of the Western Pacific (Introduction)

Argonauts of the Western Pacific (1922)

Bronislaw Malinowski

INTRODUCTION. THE SUBJECT, METHOD AND SCOPE OF THIS INQUIRY

I

The coastal populations of the South Sea Islands, with very few exceptions, are, or were before their extinction, expert navigators and traders. Several of them had evolved excellent types of large sea-going canoes, and used to embark in them on distant trade expeditions or raids of war and conquest. The Papuo-Melanesians, who inhabit the coast and the outlying islands of New Guinea, are no exception to this rule. In general they are daring sailors, industrious manufacturers, and keen traders. The manufacturing centres of important articles, such as pottery, stone implements, canoes, fine baskets, valued ornaments, are localised in several places, according to the skill of the inhabitants, their inherited tribal tradition, and special facilities offered by the district; thence they are traded over wide areas, sometimes travelling more than hundreds of miles.

Definite forms of exchange along definite trade routes are to be found established between the various tribes. A most remarkable form of intertribal trade is that obtaining between the Motu of Port Moresby and the tribes of the Papuan Gulf. The Motu sail for hundreds of miles in heavy, unwieldy canoes, called *lakatoi*,

which are provided with the characteristic crab-claw sails. They bring pottery and shell ornaments, in olden days, stone blades, to Gulf Papuans, from whom they obtain in exchange sago and the heavy dug-outs, which are used afterwards by the Motu for the construction of their *lakatoi* canoes. [1]

Further East, on the South coast, there lives the industrious, seafaring population of the Mailu, who link the East End of New Guinea with the central coast tribes by means of annual trading expeditions. [2] Finally, the natives of the islands and archipelagoes, scattered around the East End, are in constant trading relations with one another. We possess in Professor Seligman's book an excellent description of the subject, especially of the nearer trades routes between the various islands inhabited by the Southern Massim. [3] There exists, however, another, a very extensive and highly complex trading system, embracing with its ramifications, not only the islands near the East End, but also the Louisiades, Woodlark Island, the Trobriand Archipelago, and the d'Entrecasteaux group; it penetrates into the mainland of New Guinea, and exerts an indirect influence over several outlying districts, such as Rossel Island, and some parts of the Northern and Southern coast of New Guinea. This trading system, the Kula, is the

1. The *hiri*, as these expeditions are called in Motuan, have been described with a great wealth of detail and clearness of outline by Captain F. Barton, in C. G. Seligman's *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, Cambridge, 1910, Chapter VIII.

2. Cf. *The Mailu*, by B. Malinowski, in "Transactions of the R. Society f S. Australia", 1915; Chapter iv. 4, pp. 612 to 629.

3. Op. cit. Chapter XI.

subject I am setting out to describe in this volume, and it will be seen that it is an economic phenomenon of considerable theoretical importance. It looms paramount in the tribal life of those natives who live within its circuit, and its importance is fully realised by the tribesmen themselves, whose ideas, ambitions, desires and vanities are very much bound up with the Kula.

II

Before proceeding to the account of the Kula, it will be well to give a description of the methods used in the collecting of the ethnographic material. The results of scientific research in any branch of learning ought to be presented in a manner absolutely candid and above board. No one would dream of making an experimental contribution to physical or chemical science, without giving a detailed account of all the arrangements of the experiments; an exact description of the apparatus used; of the manner in which the observations were conducted; of their number; of the length of time devoted to them, and of the degree of approximation with which each measurement was made. In less exact sciences, as in biology or geology, this cannot be done as rigorously, but every student will do his best to bring home to the reader all the conditions in which the experiment or the observations were made. In Ethnography, where a candid account of such data is perhaps even more necessary, it has unfortunately in the past not always been supplied with sufficient generosity, and many writers do not ply the full searchlight of methodic sincerity, as they move among their facts and produce them before us out of complete obscurity.

It would be easy to quote works of high repute, and with a scientific hall-mark on them, in which wholesale generalisations are laid down before us, and we are not informed at all by what actual experiences the writers have reached their conclusion. No special chapter or paragraph is devoted to describing to us the conditions under which observations were made and information collected. I consider that only such ethnographic sources are of unquestionable scientific value, in which we can clearly draw the line between,

on the one hand, the results of direct observation and of native statements and interpretations, and on the other, the inferences of the author, based on his common sense and psycholgical insight [4] Indeed, some such survey, as that contained in the table, given below (Div. VI of this chapter) ought to be forthcoming, so that at a glance the reader could estimate with precision the degree of the writer's personal acquaintance with the facts which he describes, and form an idea under what conditions information had been obtained from the natives.

Again, in historical science, no one could expect to be seriously treated if he made any mystery of his sources and spoke of the past as if he knew it by divination. In Ethnography, the writer is his own chronicler and the historian at the same time, while his sources are no doubt easily accessible, but also supremely elusive and complex; they are not embodied in fixed, material documents, but in the behaviour and in the memory of living men. In Ethnography, the distance is often enormous between the brute material of information — as it is presented to the student in his own observations, in native statement, in the kaleidoscope of tribal life — and the final authoritative presentation of the results. The Ethnographer has to traverse this distance in the laborious years between the moment when he sets foot upon a native beach, and makes his first attempts to get into touch with the natives, and the

4. On this point of method again, we are indebted to the Cambridge School of Anthropology for having introduced the really scientific way of dealing with the question. More especially in the writings of Haddon, Rivers and Seligman, he distinction between inference and observation is always clearly drawn, and we can visualise with perfect precision the conditions under which the work was done.

time when he writes down the final version of his results. A brief outline of an Ethnographer's tribulations, as lived through by myself, may throw more light on the question, than any long abstract discussion could do.

III

Imagine yourself suddenly set down surrounded by all your gear, alone on a tropical beach close to a native village, while the launch or dinghy which has brought you sails away out of sight. Since you take up your abode in the compound of some neighbouring white man, trader or missionary, you have nothing to do, but to start at once on your ethnographic work. Imagine further that you are a beginner, without previous experience, with nothing to guide you and no one to help you. For the white man is temporarily absent, or else unable or unwilling to waste any of his time on you. This exactly describes my first initiation into field work on the south coast of New Guinea. I well remember the long visits I paid to the villages during the first weeks; the feeling of hopelessness and despair after many obstinate but futile attempts had entirely failed to bring me into real touch with the natives, or supply me with any material. I had periods of despondency, when I buried myself in the reading of novels, as a man might take to drink in a fit of tropical depression and boredom.

Imagine yourself then, making your first entry into the village, alone or in company with your white cicerone. Some natives flock round you, especially if they smell tobacco. Others, the more dignified and elderly, remain seated where they are. Your white companion has his routine way of treating the natives, and he neither understands, nor is very much concerned with the manner in which you, as an ethnographer, will have to approach them. The first visit leaves you with a hopeful feeling that when you return alone, things will be easier. Such was my hope at least.

I came back duly, and soon gathered an audience around me. A few compliments in pidgin-English on both sides, some tobacco changing hands, induced an atmosphere of mutual amiability. I tried then to proceed to business. First, to begin with subjects which

might arouse no suspicion, I started to "do" technology. A few natives were engaged in manufacturing some object or other. It was easy to look at it and obtain the names of the tools, and even some technical expressions about the proceedings, but there the matter ended. It must be borne in mind that pidgin-English is a very imperfect instrument for expressing one's ideas, and that before one gets a good training in framing questions and understanding answers one has the uncomfortable feeling that free communication in it with the natives will never be attained; and I was quite unable to enter into any more detailed or explicit conversation with them at first. I knew well that the best remedy for this was to collect concrete data, and accordingly I took a village census, wrote down genealogies, drew up plans and collected the terms of kinship. But all this remained dead material, which led no further into the understanding of real native mentality or behaviour, since I could neither procure a good native interpretation of any of these items, nor get what could be called the hang of tribal life. As to obtaining their ideas about religion, and magic, their beliefs in sorcery and spirits, nothing was forthcoming except a few superficial items of folk-lore, mangled by being forced into pidgin English.

Information which I received from some white residents in the district, valuable as it was in itself, was more discouraging than anything else with regard to my own work. Here were men who had lived for years in the place with constant opportunities of observing the natives and communicating with them, and who yet hardly knew one thing about them really well. How could I therefore in a few months or a year, hope to overtake and go beyond them? Moreover, the manner in which my white informants spoke about the natives and put their views was, naturally, that of untrained minds, unaccustomed to formulate their thoughts with any degree of consistency and precision. And they were for the most part, naturally enough, full of the biassed and pre-judged opinions inevitable in the average practical man, whether administrator, missionary, or trader; yet so strongly repulsive to a mind striving

after the objective, scientific view of things. The habit of treating with a self-satisfied frivolity what is really serious to the ethnographer; the cheap rating of what to him is a scientific treasure, that is to say, the native's cultural and mental peculiarities and independence — these features, so well known in the inferior amateur's writing, I found in the tone of the majority of white residents. [5]

Indeed, in my first piece of Ethnographic research on the South coast, it was not until I was alone in the district that I began to make some headway; and, at any rate, I found out where lay the secret of effective field-work. What is then this ethnographer's magic, by which he is able to evoke the real spirit of the natives, the true picture of tribal life? As usual, success can only be obtained by a patient and systematic application of a number of rules of common sense and wellknown scientific principles, and not by the discovery of any marvellous short-cut leading to the desired results without effort or trouble. The principles of method can be grouped under three main headings; first of all, naturally, the student must possess real scientific aims, and know the values and criteria of modern ethnography. Secondly, he ought to put himself in good conditions of work, that is, in the main, to live without other white men, right among the natives. Finally, he has to apply a number of special methods of collecting, manipulating and fixing his evidence. A few words must be said about these three foundation stones of field work, beginning with the second as the most elementary.

IV

Proper conditions for ethnographic work. These, as said, consist

5. I may note at once that there were a few delightful exceptions to that, to mention only my friends Billy Hancock in the Trobriands; M. Raffael Brudo, another pearl trader; and the missionary, Mr. M. K. Gilmour.

mainly in cutting oneself off from the company of other white men, and remaining in as close contact with the natives as possible, which really can only be achieved by camping right in their villages (see Plates I and II). It is very nice to have a base in a white man's compound for the stores, and to know there is a refuge there in times of sickness and surfeit of native. But it must be far enough away not to become a permanent milieu in which you live and from which you emerge at fixed hours only to "do the village". It should not even be near enough to fly to at any moment for recreation. For the native is not the natural companion for a white man, and after you have been working with him for several hours, seeing how he does his gardens, or letting him tell you items of folk-lore, or discussing his customs, you will naturally hanker after the company of your own kind. But if you are alone in a village beyond reach of this, you go for a solitary walk for an hour or so, return again and then quite naturally seek out the natives' society, this time as a relief from loneliness, Just as you would any other companionship. And by means of this natural intercourse, you learn to know him, and you become familiar with his customs and beliefs far better than when he is a paid, and often bored, informant.

There is all the difference between a sporadic plunging into the company of natives, and being really in contact with them. What does this latter mean? On the Ethnographer's side, it means that his life in the village, which at first is a strange, sometimes unpleasant, sometimes intensely interesting adventure, soon adopts quite a natural course very much in harmony with his surroundings.

Soon after I had established myself in Omarakana (Trobriand Islands), I began to take part, in a way, in the village life, to look forward to the important or festive events, to take personal interest in the gossip and the developments of the small village occurrences; to wake up every morning to a day, presenting itself to me more or less as it does to the native. I would get out from under my mosquito net, to find around me the village life beginning to stir, or the people well advanced in their working day according to the hour and also to the season, for they get up and begin their labours early

or late, as work presses. As I went on my morning walk through the village, I could see intimate details of family life, of toilet, cooking, taking of meals; I could see the arrangements for the day's work, people starting on their errands, or groups of men and women busy at some manufacturing tasks (see Plate III). Quarrels, jokes, family scenes, events usually trivial, sometimes dramatic but always significant, formed the atmosphere of my daily life, as well as of theirs. It must be remembered that as the natives saw me constantly every day, they ceased to be interested or alarmed, or made self-conscious by my presence, and I ceased to be a disturbing element in the tribal life which I was to study, altering it by my very approach, as always happens with a new-comer to every savage community. In fact, as they knew that I would thrust my nose into everything, even where a well-mannered native would not dream of intruding, they finished by regarding me as part and parcel of their life, a necessary evil or nuisance, mitigated by donations of tobacco.

Later on in the day, whatever happened was within easy reach, and there was no possibility of its escaping my notice. Alarms about the sorcerer's approach in the evening, one or two big, really important quarrels and rifts within the community, cases of illness, attempted cures and deaths, magical rites which had to be performed, all these I had not to pursue, fearful of missing them, but they took place under my very eyes, at my own doorstep, so to speak (see Plate IV). And it must be emphasised whenever anything dramatic or important occurs it is essential to investigate it at the very moment of happening, because the natives cannot but talk about it, are too excited to be reticent, and too interested to be mentally lazy in supplying details. Also, over and over again, I committed breaches of etiquette, which the natives, familiar enough with me, were not slow in pointing out. I had to learn how to behave, and to a certain extent, I acquired "the feeling" for native good and bad manners. With this, and with the capacity of enjoying their company and sharing some of their games and amusements, I began to feel that I was indeed in touch with the natives, and

this is certainly the preliminary condition of being able to carry on successful field work.

V

But the Ethnographer has not only to spread his nets in the right place, and wait for what will fall into them. He must be an active huntsman, and drive his quarry into them and follow it up to its most inaccessible lairs. And that leads us to the more active methods of pursuing ethnographic evidence. It has been mentioned at the end of Division III that the Ethnographer has to be inspired by the knowledge of the most modern results of scientific study, by its principles and aims. I shall not enlarge upon this subject, except by way of one remark, to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding. Good training in theory, and acquaintance with its latest results, is not identical with being burdened with "preconceived ideas". If a man sets out on an expedition, determined to prove certain hypotheses, if he is incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under the pressure of evidence, needless to say his work will be worthless. But the more problems he brings with him into the field, the more he is in the habit of moulding his theories according to facts, and of seeing facts in their bearing upon theory, the better he is equipped for the work. Preconceived ideas are pernicious in any scientific work, but foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and these problems are first revealed to the observer by his theoretical studies.

In Ethnology the early efforts of Bastian, Tylor, Morgan, the German *Volkerpsychologen* have remoulded the older crude information of travellers, missionaries, etc., and have shown us the importance of applying deeper conceptions and discarding crude and misleading ones [6].

6. According to a useful habit of the terminology of science, I use the word Ethnography for the empirical and

The concept of animism superseded that of "fetichism" or "devil-worship", both meaningless terms. The understanding of the classificatory systems of relationship paved the way for the brilliant, modern researches on native sociology in the field-work of the Cambridge school. The psychological analysis of the German thinkers has brought forth an abundant crop of most valuable information in the results obtained by the recent German expeditions to Africa, South America and the Pacific, while the theoretical works of Frazer, Durkheim and others have already, and will no doubt still for a long time inspire field workers and lead them to new results. The field worker relies entirely upon inspiration from theory. Of course he may be also a theoretical thinker and worker, and there he can draw on himself for stimulus. But the two functions are separate, and in actual research they have to be separated both in time and conditions of work.

As always happens when scientific interest turns towards and begins to labour on a field so far only prospected by the curiosity of amateurs, Ethnology has introduced law and order into what seemed chaotic and freakish. It has transformed for us the sensational, wild and unaccountable world of "savages" into a number of well ordered communities, governed by law, behaving and thinking according to consistent principles. The word "savage", whatever association it might have had originally, connotes ideas of boundless liberty, of irregularity, of something extremely and extraordinarily quaint. In popular thinking, we imagine that the natives live on the bosom of Nature, more or less as they can and like, the prey of irregular, phantasmagoric beliefs and apprehensions. Modern science, on the contrary, shows that their social institutions have a very definite organisation, that they are governed by authority, law and order in their public and personal

descriptive results of the science of Man, and the word Ethnology for speculative and comparative theories

relations, while the latter are, besides, under the control of extremely complex ties of kinship and clanship. Indeed, we see them entangled in a mesh of duties, functions and privileges which correspond to an elaborate tribal, communal and kinship organisation (see Plate IV). Their beliefs and practices do not by any means lack consistency of a certain type, and their knowledge of the outer world is sufficient to guide them in many of their strenuous enterprises and activities. Their artistic productions again lack neither meaning nor beauty.

It is a very far cry from the famous answer given long ago by a representative authority who, asked, what are the manners and customs of the natives, answered, "Customs none, manners beastly" to the position of the modern Ethnographer. This latter, with his tables of kinship terms, genealogies, maps, plans and diagrams, proves an extensive and big organisation, shows the constitution of the tribe, of the clan, of the family; and he gives us a picture of the natives subjected to a strict code of behaviour and good manners, to which in comparison the life at the Court of Versailles or Escurial was free and easy. [7]

7. The legendary "early authority" who found the natives only beastly and without customs is left behind by a modern writer, who, speaking about the Southern Massim with whom he lived and worked "in close contact" for many years, says "...We teach lawless men to become obedient, inhuman men to love, and savage men to change". And again: "Guided in his conduct by nothing but his instincts and propensities, and governed by his unchecked passions..." "Lawless, inhuman and savage!" A grosser misstatement of the real state of things could not be invented by anyone wishing to parody the Missionary

Thus the first and basic ideal of ethnographic field-work is to give a clear and firm outline of the social constitution, and disentangle the laws and regularities of all cultural phenomena from the irrelevances. The firm skeleton of the tribal life has to be first ascertained. This ideal imposes in the first place the fundamental obligation of giving a complete survey of the phenomena, and not of picking out the sensational, the singular, still less the funny and quaint. The time when we could tolerate accounts presenting us the native as a distorted, childish caricature of a human being are gone. This picture is false and like many other falsehoods, it has been killed by Science. The field Ethnographer has seriously and soberly to cover the full extent of the phenomena in each aspect of tribal culture studied, making no difference between what is commonplace, or drab, or ordinary, and what strikes him as astonishing and out-of-the-way. At the same time, the whole area of tribal culture in all its aspects has to be gone over in research. The consistency, the law and order which obtain within each aspect make also for joining them into one coherent whole.

An Ethnographer who sets out to study only religion, or only technology, or only social organisation cuts out an artificial field for inquiry, and he will be seriously handicapped in his work.

VI

Having settled this very general rule, let us descend to more detailed consideration of method. The Ethnographer has in the field, according to what has just been said, the duty before him of drawing up all the rules and regularities of tribal life; all that is permanent and fixed; of giving an anatomy of their culture, of depicting the constitution of their society. But these things, though crystallised and set, are nowhere formulated. There is no written or explicitly

point of view. Quoted from the Rev. C. W. Abel, of the London Missionary Society, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, no date.

expressed code of laws, and their whole tribal tradition, the whole structure of their society, are embodied in the most elusive of all materials; the human being. But not even in human mind or memory are these laws to be found definitely formulated. The natives obey the forces and commands of the tribal code, but they do not comprehend them; exactly as they obey their instincts and their impulses, but could not lay down a single law of psychology. The regularities in native institutions are an automatic result of the interaction of the mental forces of tradition, and of the material conditions of environment. Exactly as a humble member of any modern institution, whether it be the state, or the church, or the army, is of it and in it, but has no vision of the resulting integral action of the whole, still less could furnish any account of its organisation, so it would be futile to attempt questioning a native in abstract, sociological terms. The difference is that, in our society, every institution has its intelligent members, its historians, and its archives and documents, whereas in a native society there are none of these. After this is realised an expedient has to be found to overcome this difficulty. This expedient for an Ethnographer consists in collecting concrete data of evidence, and drawing the general inferences for himself. This seems obvious on the face of it, but was not found out or at least practised in Ethnography till field work was taken up by men of science. Moreover, in giving it practical effect, it is neither easy to devise the concrete applications of this method, nor to carry them out systematically and consistently.

Though we cannot ask a native about abstract, general rules, we can always enquire how a given case would be treated. Thus for instance, in asking how they would treat crime, or punish it, it would be vain to put to a native a sweeping question such as, “How do you treat and punish a criminal?” for even words could not be found to express it in native, or in pidgin. But an imaginary case, or still better, a real occurrence, will stimulate a native to express his opinion and to supply plentiful information. A real case indeed will start the natives on a wave of discussion, evoke expressions of

indignation, show them taking sides all of which talk will probably contain a wealth of definite views, of moral censures, as well as reveal the social mechanism set in motion by the crime committed. From there, it will be easy to lead them on to speak of other similar cases, to remember other actual occurrences or to discuss them in all their implications and aspects. From this material, which ought to cover the widest possible range of facts, the inference is obtained by simple induction. The scientific treatment differs from that of good common sense, first in that a student will extend the completeness and minuteness of survey much further and in a pedantically systematic and methodical manner; and secondly, in that the scientifically trained mind, will push the inquiry along really relevant lines, and towards aims possessing real importance. Indeed, the object of scientific training is to provide the empirical investigator with a *mental chart*, in accordance with which he can take his bearings and lay his course.

To return to our example, a number of definite cases discussed will reveal to the Ethnographer the social machinery for punishment. This is one part, one aspect of tribal authority. Imagine further that by a similar method of inference from definite data, he arrives at understanding leadership in war, in economic enterprise, in tribal festivities there he has at once all the data necessary to answer the questions about tribal government and social authority. In actual field work, the comparison of such data, the attempt to piece them together, will often reveal rifts and gaps in the information which lead on to further investigations.

From my own experience, I can say that, very often, a problem seemed settled, everything fixed and clear, till I began to write down a short preliminary sketch of my results. And only then, did I see the enormous deficiencies, which would show me where lay new problems, and lead me on to new work. In fact, I spent a few months between my first and second expeditions, and over a year between that and the subsequent one, in going over all my material, and making parts of it almost ready for publication each time, though each time I knew I would have to re-write it. Such

cross-fertilisation of constructive work and observation, I found most valuable, and I do not think I could have made real headway without it. I give this bit of my own history merely to show that what has been said so far is not only an empty programme, but the result of personal experience. In this volume, the description is given of a big institution connected with ever so many associated activities, and presenting many aspects. To anyone who reflects on the subject, it will be clear that the information about a phenomenon of such high complexity and of so many ramifications, could not be obtained with any degree of exactitude and completeness, without a constant interplay of constructive attempts and empirical checking. In fact, I have written up an outline of the Kula institution at least half a dozen times while in the field and in the intervals between my expeditions. Each time, new problems and difficulties presented themselves.

The collecting of concrete data over a wide range of facts is thus one of the main points of field method. The obligation is not to enumerate a few examples only, but to exhaust as far as possible all the cases within reach; and, on this search for cases, the investigator will score most whose mental chart is clearest. But, whenever the material of the search allows it, this mental chart ought to be transformed into a real one; it ought to materialise into a diagram, a plan, an exhaustive, synoptic table of cases. Long since, in all tolerably good modern books on natives, we expect to find a full list or table of kinship terms, which includes all the data relative to it, and does not just pick out a few strange and anomalous relationships or expressions. In the investigation of kinship, the following up of one relation after another in concrete cases leads naturally to the construction of genealogical tables. Practised already by the best early writers, such as Munzinger, and, if I remember rightly, Kubary, this method has been developed to its fullest extent in the works of Dr. Rivers. Again, studying the concrete data of economic transactions, in order to trace the history of a valuable object, and to gauge the nature of its circulation, the principle of completeness and thoroughness would lead to

construct tables of transactions, such as we find in the work of Professor Seligman [8]. It is in following Professor Seligman's example in this matter that I was able to settle certain of the more difficult and detailed rules of the Kula. The method of reducing information, if possible, into charts or synoptic tables ought to be extended to the study of practically all aspects of native life. All types of economic transactions may be studied by following up connected, actual cases, and putting them into a synoptic chart; again, a table ought to be drawn up of all the gifts and presents customary in a given society, a table including the sociological, ceremonial, and economic definition of every item. Also, systems of magic, connected series of ceremonies, types of legal acts, all could be charted, allowing each entry to be synoptically defined under a number of headings. Besides this, of course, the genealogical census of every community, studied more in detail, extensive maps, plans and diagrams, illustrating ownership in garden land, hunting and fishing privileges, etc., serve as the more fundamental documents of ethnographic research.

A genealogy is nothing else but a synoptic chart of a number of connected relations of kinship. Its value as an instrument of research consists in that it allows the investigator to put questions which he formulates to himself in abstracto, but can put concretely to the native informant. As a document, its value consists in that it gives a number of authenticated data, presented in their natural grouping. A synoptic chart of magic fulfils the same function. As an instrument of research, I have used it in order to ascertain, for instance, the ideas about the nature of magical power. With a chart before me, I could easily and conveniently go over one item after the other, and note down the relevant practices and beliefs contained in each of them. The answer to my abstract problem could then

8. For instance, the tables of circulation of the valuable axe blades, op. cit. pp. 531, 532.

be obtained by drawing a general inference from all the cases, and the procedure is illustrated in Chapters XVII and XVIII [9]. I cannot enter further into the discussion of this question, which would need further distinctions, such as between a chart of concrete, actual data, such as is a genealogy, and a chart summarising the outlines of a custom or belief, as a chart of a magical system would be.

Returning once more to the question of methodological candour, discussed previously in Division II, I wish to point out here, that the procedure of concrete and tabularised presentation of data ought to be applied first to the Ethnographer's own credentials. That is, an Ethnographer, who wishes to be trusted, must show clearly and concisely, in a tabularised form, which are his own direct observations, and which the indirect information that form the bases of his account. The Table on the next page will serve as an example of this procedure and help the reader of this book to form an idea of the trustworthiness of any statement he is specially anxious to check. With the help of this Table and the many references scattered throughout the text, as to how, under what circumstances, and with what degree of accuracy I arrived at a given

9. In this book, besides the adjoining Table, which does not strictly belong to the class of document of which I speak here, the reader will find only a few samples of synoptic tables, such as the list of Kula partners mentioned and analysed in Chapter XIII, Division II, the list of gifts and presents in Chapter VI, Division VI, not tabularised, only described; the synoptic data of a Kula expedition in Chapter XVI, and the table of Kula magic given in Chapter XVII. Here, I have not wanted to overload the account with charts, etc., preferring to reserve them till the full publication of my material.

item of knowledge, there will, I hope remain no obscurity whatever as to the sources of the book.

Chronological list of Kula events witnessed by the writer

FIRST EXPEDITION, August, 1914–March, 1915.

March, 1915. In the village of Dikoyas (Woodlark Island) a few ceremonial offerings seen. Preliminary information obtained.

SECOND EXPEDITION, May, 1915–May, 1916.

June, 1915. A Kabigidoya visit arrives from Vakuta to Kiriwina. Its anchoring at Kavataria witnessed and the men seen at Omarakana, where information collected.

July, 1915. Several parties from Kitava land on the beach of Kaulukuba. The men examined in Omarakana. Much information collected in that period.

September, 1915. Unsuccessful attempt to sail to Kitava with To'uluwa, the chief of Omarakana.

October-November, 1915. Departure noticed of three expeditions from Kiriwina to Kitava. Each time To'uluwa brings home a haul of *mwali* (armshells).

November, 1915–*March*, 1916. Preparations for a big overseas expedition from Kiriwina to the Marshall Bennett Islands. Construction of a canoe; renovating of another; sail making in Omarakana; launching; *tasasoria* on the beach of Kaulukuba. At the same time, information is being obtained about these and the associated subjects. Some magical texts of canoe building and Kula magic obtained.

THIRD EXPEDITION, October, 1917–October, 1918.

November, 1917 *December*, 1917. Inland Kula; some data obtained in Tukwaukwa.

December–February, 1918. Parties from Kitava arrive in Wawela. Collection of information about the *yoyova*. Magic and spells of Kaygau obtained.

March, 1918. Preparations in Sanaroa; preparations in the Amphletts; the Dobuan fleet arrives in the Amphletts. The *uvalaku* expedition from Dobu followed to Boyowa.

April, 1918. Their arrival; their reception in Sinaketa; the Kula

transactions; the big intertribal gathering. Some magical formulae obtained.

May, 1918. Party from Kitava seen in Vakuta,

June, *July*, 1918. Information about Kula magic and customs checked and amplified in Omarakana, especially with regard to its Eastern branches.

August, *September*, 1918. Magical texts obtained in Sinaketa.

October, 1918. Information obtained from a number of natives in Dobu and Southern Massim district (examined in Samarai).

To summarise the first, cardinal point of method, I may say each phenomenon ought to be studied through the broadest range possible of its concrete manifestations; each studied by an exhaustive survey of detailed examples. If possible, the results ought to be embodied into some sort of synoptic chart, both to be used as an instrument of study, and to be presented as an ethnological document. With the help of such documents and such study of actualities the clear outline of the framework of the natives' culture in the widest sense of the word, and the constitution of their society, can be presented. This method could be called *the method of statistic documentation by concrete evidence*.

VII

Needless to add, in this respect, the scientific field-work is far above even the best amateur productions. There is, however, one point in which the latter often excel. This is, in the presentation of intimate touches of native life, in bringing home to us these aspects of it with which one is made familiar only through being in close contact with the natives, one way or the other, for a long period of time. In certain results of scientific work — especially that which has been called "survey work" — we are given an excellent skeleton, so to speak, of the tribal constitution, but it lacks flesh and blood. We learn much about the framework of their society, but within it, we cannot perceive or imagine the realities of human life, the even flow of everyday events, the occasional ripples of excitement over a feast, or ceremony, or some singular occurrence. In working out the rules and regularities of native custom, and in obtaining

a precise formula for them from the collection of data and native statements, we find that this very precision is foreign to real life, which never adheres rigidly to any rules. It must be supplemented by the observation of the manner in which a given custom is carried out, of the behaviour of the natives in obeying the rules so exactly formulated by the ethnographer, of the very exceptions which in sociological phenomena almost always occur.

If all the conclusions are solely based on the statements of informants, or deduced from objective documents, it is of course impossible to supplement them in actually observed data of real behaviour. And that is the reason why certain works of amateur residents of long standing, such as educated traders and planters, medical men and officials, and last, not least, of the few intelligent and unbiassed missionaries to whom Ethnography owes so much, this is the reason why these works surpass in plasticity and in vividness most of the purely scientific accounts. But if the specialised field-worker can adopt the conditions of living described above, he is in a far better position to be really in touch with the natives than any other white resident. For none of them lives right in a native village, except for very short periods, and everyone has his own business, which takes up a considerable part of his time. Moreover, if, like a trader or a missionary or an official he enters into active relations with the native, if he has to transform or influence or make use of him, this makes a real, unbiassed, impartial observation impossible, and precludes all-round sincerity, at least in the case of the missionaries and officials.

Living in the village with no other business but to follow native life, one sees the customs, ceremonies and transactions over and over again, one has examples of their beliefs as they are actually lived through, and the full body and blood of actual native life fills out soon the skeleton of abstract constructions. That is the reason why, working under such conditions as previously described, the Ethnographer is enabled to add something essential to the bare outline of tribal constitution, and to supplement it by all the details of behaviour, setting and small incident. He is able in each case to

state whether an act is public or private; how a public assembly behaves, and what it looks like; he can judge whether an event is ordinary or an exciting and singular one; whether natives bring to it a great deal of sincere and earnest spirit, or perform it in fun; whether they do it in a perfunctory manner, or with zeal and deliberation.

In other words, there is a series of phenomena of great importance which cannot possibly be recorded by questioning or computing documents, but have to be observed in their full actuality. Let us call them the *inponderabilia of actual life*. Here belong such things as the routine of a man's working day, the details of his care of the body, of the manner of taking food and preparing it; the tone of conversational and social life around the village fires, the existence of strong friendships or hostilities, and of passing sympathies and dislikes between people; the subtle yet unmistakable manner in which personal vanities and ambitions are reflected in the behaviour of the individual and in the emotional reactions of those who surround him. All these facts can and ought to be scientifically formalated and recorded, but it is necessary that this be done, not by a superficial registration of details, as is usually done by untrained observers, but with an effort at penetrating the mental attitude expressed in them. And that is the reason why the work of scientifically trained observers, once seriously applied to the study of this aspect, will, I believe, yield results of surpassing value. So far, it has been done only by amateurs, and therefore done, on the whole, indifferently.

Indeed, if we remember that these imponderable yet all important facts of actual life are part of the real substance of the social fabric, that in them are spun the innumerable threads which keep together the family, the clan, the village community, the tribe — their significance becomes clear. The more crystallised bonds of social grouping, such as the definite ritual, the economic and legal duties, the obligations, the ceremonial gifts and formal marks of regard, though equally important for the student, are certainly felt less strongly by the individual who has to fulfil them. Applying this to

ourselves, we all know that "family life" means for us, first and foremost, the atmosphere of home, all the innumerable small acts and attentions in which are expressed the affection, the mutual interest, the little preferences, and the little antipathies which constitute intimacy. That we may inherit from this person, that we shall have to walk after the hearse of the other, though sociologically these facts belong to the definition of "family" and "family life", in personal perspective of what family truly is to us, they normally stand very much in the background.

Exactly the same applies to a native community, and if the Ethnographer wants to bring their real life home to his readers, he must on no account neglect this. Neither aspect, the intimate, as little as the legal, ought to be glossed over. Yet as a rule in ethnographic accounts we have not both but either the one or the other and, so far, the intimate one has hardly ever been properly treated. In all social relations besides the family ties, even those between mere tribesmen and, beyond that, between hostile or friendly members of different tribes, meeting on any sort of social business, there is this in — inflate side, expressed by the typical details of intercourse, the tone of their behaviour in the presence of one another. This side is different from the definite, crystalised legal frame of the relationship, and it has to be studied and stated in its own right.

In the same way, in studying the conspicuous acts of tribal life, such as ceremonies, rites, festivities, etc., the details and tone of behaviour ought to be given, besides the bare outline of events. The importance of this may be exemplified by one instance. Much has been said and written about survival. Yet the survival character of an act is expressed in nothing as well as in the concomitant behaviour, in the way in which it is carried out. Take any example from our own culture, whether it be the pomp and pageantry of a state ceremony, or a picturesque custom kept up by street urchins, its "outline" will not tell you whether the rite flourishes still with full vigour in the hearts of those who perform it or assist at the performance or whether they regard it as almost a dead thing, kept alive for

tradition's sake. But observe and fix the data of their behaviour, and at once the degree of vitality of the act will become clear. There is no doubt, from all points of sociological, or psychological analysis, and in any question of theory, the manner and type of behaviour observed in the performance of an act is of the highest importance. Indeed behaviour is a fact, a relevant fact, and one that can be recorded. And foolish indeed and short-sighted would be the man of science who would pass by a whole class of phenomena, ready to be garnered, and leave them to waste, even though he did not see at the moment to what theoretical use they might be put!

As to the actual method of observing and recording in fieldwork these *imponderabilia of actual life and of typical behaviour*, there is no doubt that the personal equation of the observer comes in here more prominently, than in the collection of crystalised, ethnographic data. But here also the main endeavour must be to let facts speak for themselves. If in making a daily round of the village, certain small incidents, characteristic forms of taking food, of conversing, of doing work (see for instance Plate III) are found occuring over and over again, they should be noted down at once. It is also important that this work of collecting and fixing impressions should begin early in the course of working out a district. Because certain subtle peculiarities, which make an impression as long as they are novel, cease to be noticed as soon as they become familiar. Others again can only be perceived with a better knowledge of the local conditions. An ethnographic diary, carried on systematically throughout the course of one's work in a district would be the ideal instrument for this sort of study. And if, side by side with the normal and typical, the ethnographer carefully notes the slight, or the more pronounced deviations from it, he will be able to indicate the two extremes within which the normal moves.

In observing ceremonies or other tribal events, such, for instance as the scene depicted in Plate IV, it is necessary, not only to note down those occurrences and details which are prescribed by tradition and custom to be the essential course of the act, but also the Ethnographer ought to record carefully and precisely, one after

the other, the actions of the actors and of the spectators. Forgetting for a moment that he knows and understands the structure of this ceremony, the main dogmatic ideas underlying it, he might try to find himself only in the midst of an assembly of human beings, who behave seriously or jocularly, with earnest concentration or with bored frivolity, who are either in the same mood as he finds them every day, or else are screwed up to a high pitch of excitement, and so on and so on. With his attention constantly directed to this aspect of tribal life, with the constant endeavour to fix it, to express it in terms of actual fact, a good deal of reliable and expressive material finds its way into his notes. He will be able to "set" the act into its proper place in tribal life, that is to show whether it is exceptional or commonplace, one in which the natives behave ordinarily, or one in which their whole behaviour is transformed. And he will also be able to bring all this home to his readers in a clear, convincing manner.

Again, in this type of work, it is good for the Ethnographer sometimes to put aside camera, note book and pencil, and to join in himself in what is going on. He can take part in the natives' games, he can follow them on their visits and walks, sit down and listen and share in their conversations. I am not certain if this is equally easy for everyone — perhaps the Slavonic nature is more plastic and more naturally savage than that of Western Europeans — but though the degree of success varies, the attempt is possible for everyone. Out of such plunges into the life of the natives — and I made them frequently not only for study's sake but because everyone needs human company — I have carried away a distinct feeling that their behaviour, their manner of being, in all sorts of tribal transactions, became more transparent and easily understandable than it had been before. All these methodological remarks, the reader will find again illustrated in the following chapters.

VIII

Finally, let us pass to the third and last aim of scientific field-work, to the last type of phenomenon which ought to be recorded in order to give a full and adequate picture of native culture. Besides

the firm outline of tribal constitution and crystallised cultural items which form the skeleton, besides the data of daily life and ordinary behaviour, which are, so to speak, its flesh and blood, there is still to be recorded the spirit — the natives' views and opinions and utterances. For, in every act of tribal life, there is, first, the routine prescribed by custom and tradition, then there is the manner in which it is carried out, and lastly there is the commentary to it, contained in the natives' mind. A man who submits to various customary obligations, who follows a traditional course of action, does it impelled by certain motives, to the accompaniment of certain feelings, guided by certain ideas. These ideas, feelings, and impulses are moulded and conditioned by the culture in which we find them, and are therefore an ethnic peculiarity of the given society. An attempt must be made therefore, to study and record them.

But is this possible? Are these subjective states not too elusive and shapeless? And, even granted that people usually do feel or think or experience certain psychological states in association with the performance of customary acts, the majority of them surely are not able to formulate these states, to put them into words. This latter point must certainly be granted, and it is perhaps the real Gordian knot in the study of the facts of social psychology. Without trying to cut or untie this knot, that is to solve the problem theoretically, or to enter further into the field of general methodology, I shall make directly for the question of practical means to overcome some of the difficulties involved.

First of all, it has to be laid down that we have to study here stereotyped manners of thinking and feeling. As sociologists, we are not interested in what A or B may feel *qua* [10] individuals, in the accidental course of their own personal experiences we are interested only in what they feel and think *qua* members of a given

10. *qua (from Latin) — as.*

community. Now in this capacity, their mental states receive a certain stamp, become stereotyped by the institutions in which they live, by the influence of tradition and folk-lore, by the very vehicle of thought, that is by language. The social and cultural environment in which they move forces them to think and feel in a definite manner. Thus, a man who lives in a polyandrous community cannot experience the same feelings of jealousy, as a strict monogynist, though he might have the elements of them. A man who lives within the sphere of the Kula cannot become permanently and sentimentally attached to certain of his possessions, in spite of the fact that he values them most of all. These examples are crude, but better ones will be found in the text of this book.

So, the third commandment of field-work runs: Find out the typical ways of thinking and feeling, corresponding to the institutions and culture of a given community, and formulate the results in the most convincing manner. What will be the method of procedure? The best ethnographical writers — here again the Cambridge school with Haddon, Rivers, and Seligman rank first among English Ethnographers — have always tried to quote *verbatim* [11] statements of crucial importance. They also adduce terms of native classification; sociological, psychological and industrial *termini technici* [12] , and have rendered the verbal contour of native thought as precisely as possible. One step further in this line can be made by the Ethnographer, who acquires a knowledge of the native language and can use it as an instrument of inquiry. In working in the Kiriwinian language, I found still some difficulty in writing down the statement directly in translation which at first I used to do in the act of taking notes. The translation often robbed the text of all its significant characteristics — rubbed off all its

11. *verbatim* (Latin) — literally, word by word.

12. termini technici (Latin) — technical terms.

points — so that gradually I was led to note down certain important phrases just as they were spoken, in the native tongue. As my knowledge of the language progressed, I put down more and more in Kiriwinian, till at last I found myself writing exclusively in that language, rapidly taking notes, word for word, of each statement. No sooner had I arrived at this point, than I recognised that I was thus acquiring at the same time an abundant linguistic material, and a series of ethnographic documents which ought to be reproduced as I had fixed them, besides being utilised in the writing up of my account[15]. This *corpus inscriptionum Kiriwiniensium* can be utilised, not only by myself, but by all those who, through their better penetration and ability of interpreting them, may find points which escape my attention, very much as the other *corpora* form the basis for the various interpretations of ancient and prehistoric cultures; only, these ethnographic inscriptions are all decipherable and clear, have been almost all translated fully and unambiguously, and have been provided with native cross-commentaries or *scholia*[16] obtained from living sources.

No more need be said on this subject here, as later on a whole chapter (Chapter XVIII) is devoted to it, and to its exemplification by several native texts. The *Corpus* will of course be published separately at a later date.

IX

Our considerations thus indicate that the goal of ethnographic field-work must be approached through three avenues:

1. *The organisation of the tribe, and the anatomy of its culture* must be recorded in firm, clear outline. The method of *concrete, statistical documentation* is the means through which such an outline has to be given.
2. Within this frame, the *imponderabilia of actual life*, and the *type of behaviour* have to be filled in. They have to be collected through minute, detailed observations, in the form of some sort of ethnographic diary, made possible by close contact with native life.

3. A collection of ethnographic statements, characteristic narratives, typical utterances, items of folk-lore and magical formulae has to be given as a *corpus inscriptionum*, as documents of native mentality.

These three lines of approach lead to the final goal, of which an Ethnographer should never lose sight. This goal is, briefly, to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of his world. We have to study man, and we must study what concerns him most intimately, that is, the hold which life has on him. In each culture, the values are slightly different; people aspire after different aims, follow different impulses, yearn after a different form of happiness. In each culture, we find different institutions in which man pursues his life-interest, different customs by which he satisfies his aspirations, different codes of law and morality which reward his virtues or punish his defections. To study the institutions, customs, and codes or to study the behaviour and mentality without the subjective desire of feeling by what these people live, of realising the substance of their happiness is, in my opinion, to miss the greatest reward which we can hope to obtain from the study of man.

These generalities the reader will find illustrated in the following chapters. We shall see there the savage striving to satisfy certain aspirations, to attain his type of value, to follow his line of social ambition. We shall see him led on to perilous and difficult enterprises by a tradition of magical and heroical exploits, shall see him following the lure of his own romance. Perhaps as we read the account of these remote customs there may emerge a feeling of solidarity with the endeavours and ambitions of these natives. Perhaps man's mentality will be revealed to us, and brought near, along some lines which we never have followed before. Perhaps through realising human nature in a shape very distant and foreign to us, we shall have some light shed on our own. In this, and in this case only, we shall be justified in feeling that it has been worth our

while to understand these natives, their institutions and customs, and that we have gathered some profit from the Kula.

7. Feelings in the Field: The Emotional Labour of the Ethnographer

Feelings in the Field: The Emotional Labour of the Ethnographer (2021)

Maria Concetta Lo Bosco

Key Takeaways – Brooke S. (Anthropology 1000 2022)

"Feelings in the Field: The Emotional Labor of the Ethnographer" discusses how fieldwork is emotional and can create issues, how anthropologists take on activist roles and how they need better support in the field.

The most important thing to take away is the emotional impact fieldwork can have on anthropologists when no boundaries are discussed.

An important person is Maria Concetta Lo Bosco who did her research in Portugal with parents whose kids are Autistic. One thing to note before reading this chapter is that the parents originally did not want Maria around because she wasn't a mother and they felt she couldn't relate to them.

- Issue one: the internet is easily accessible which means she was constantly available which made her work exhausting; technology also has its problems, especially when her internet went out on an important call.
- Issue two: her research was partially online which meant the parents had access to her personal life and were able to constantly share videos.
- She had to take on the role of being an activist for these parents to show her agreement.

Students may find challenging that even though emotions cause a lot of stress for researchers it is good to experience them so they can better understand and use it as a tool in their fieldwork. This relates back to the concept of reflexivity in Chapter 3 where the researcher must examine their own feelings and reactions and how this influences what they do in certain situations.

ABSTRACT: Despite the recent theoretical debate over the importance of addressing emotions in fieldwork, most European undergraduate programmes in anthropology still lack methodology courses that specifically focus on the emotional impact of doing research. In this article, I draw from my research with activist parents of autistic children in Portugal to explore the affective dimensions of fieldwork experience. In particular, I give an account of how I have

dwelled on the emotional challenges that I faced, how these have resulted in vehicles of understanding and affected the analysis of my work as an anthropologist. While fieldwork experience always entails unexpected and surprising emotional challenges, I argue that as anthropologists we can surely benefit from more tailored support networks, safer spaces for discussion, and better pastoral care.

Ethnographic fieldwork has defined anthropology both as a discipline and practice (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). It is broadly conceived as that unique and irreplaceable rite of passage which will ultimately turn an apprentice anthropologist in a worthy representative of the 'real' anthropology community, and as such represents a cornerstone experience of our research journey as anthropologists (and as other social scientists too). A widespread emphasis on the fascinating aspects of fieldwork experience, however, has led anthropologists to overlook or shy away from discussing the emotional labour inherent in conducting research. As a consequence of this situation, we do not frequently describe or address the unexpected challenges and greatest endeavours that we face while being in the field. In previous decades, several anthropologists championed the need to reverse this long-standing habit of relegating the emotional experience of fieldwork to something private, personal and almost secret (Davies and Spencer 2010; Lindholm 2007). Consider, for instance, that feeling of epiphany in reading our fieldnotes and remembering the many difficult decisions, joyful moments, problematic encounters and different emotional states that we went through during our research. How much of this emotional labour comes to light in our academic writings? In addition to taking notes about the places, practices, behaviours and conversations we observe in the field

(Mills et al. 2010), in the fieldnotes we describe our thoughts, questions, concerns and emotions (Emerson et al. 2011), capturing – sometimes in detail and extensively, other times in a haphazard and confusing way – the frankest picture of our field experience.

The purpose of this article is to highlight the role of emotions in understanding both our research practice and professional training as anthropologists. I have chosen to focus on three particular circumstances – parents' initial reluctance to take part in my research, my need to balance their demanding attention and emotional proximity, and my reaction to their call for me to engage in disability rights activism – to show how they have encouraged me to consider the affective implications of doing research and the importance of research training for early career scholars. My observations are introduced by some fieldnote excerpts, as I believe they are methodologically relevant for understanding the ethnographer's emotional experience. By recording my different emotional states, fieldnotes show the intricate ways in which my auto-reflexivity took place, prompting me to address the emotional challenges that I faced during fieldwork. I argue that confronting the emotional aspects of fieldwork elicits unexpected and creative strategies of coping, and represents a key starting point for the recognition of our emotional labour as ethnographers. The emotional involvement with the field, indeed, reveals to us the value and the hidden potentiality of being vulnerable within the context of participant observation.

In the following sections, I will concisely illustrate anthropology's theoretical debate over the affective dimensions of fieldwork. I will then explore some of the emotional issues that I have faced during my fieldwork in Portugal on the autism advocacy movement (Lo Bosco 2018). While I did encounter autistic children during the research I conducted[1], they were not my primary interlocutors. My

1. Identity-first language (i.e. autistic person) – opposed to

primary aim was to explore how parents of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) have become disability rights activists and act in support of autism advocacy. My fieldwork has relied on participant observation, face-to-face and online interactions, and in-depth interviews with 19 parents – 15 women and 4 men – at different points in time from January 2013 to February 2016. All my interlocutors were Portuguese citizens in their late 30s to early 40s, mainly hailing from the working-class and tertiary milieu. I met nine of them thanks to the intermediation of the Associação Portuguesa para as Perturbações do Desenvolvimento e Autismo (Portuguese Association for Developmental Disorders and Autism; APPDA). The other 10 parents belonged to different online autism advocacy groups. In addition to having been in contact through follow-up conversations and interactions via social media platforms, we also met in person during autism and advocacy-related activities (such as celebratory events, conferences, marches, parliamentary question periods, public gatherings and in-home discussions).[2]

person-first language (i.e. person with autism) – is preferred by many autistic people, their relatives and their allies. In this article, I choose to use predominantly identity-first language (Kenny et al. 2015).

2. Research participants have given me explicit consent to use the content of face-to-face and social-media-based interactions and interviews; their participation was voluntary, and their names are pseudonymised to secure anonymity

Emotional Labour in Anthropology

According to Charles Lindholm (2007), anthropology has historically neglected the study of emotions because of their common association with feminine irrationality and sentimentality and because of the discipline's concern about the validity of participant observation as a method: 'For anthropologists seeking professional legitimacy in the sciences, a masculine meaning-centered and cerebral model of research naturally trumped any serious study of effeminate, irrational emotional states' (2007: 31). Feminist research has contributed to moving emotions from the margins and the extraordinary towards the centre, thereby influencing anthropology's viewpoint as well. Emotions have been interpreted as a form of embodied experience inextricably linked to our relational life (Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990) and as culturally informed expressions of the self (Rosaldo 1984) within a variety of geographic and cultural settings (Lutz and White 1986; Milton and Svasek 2005). Anthropology scholarship has also acknowledged the methodological implications of emotions because they are a valid and powerful tool for understanding others. In this respect, Unni Wikan (1992) proposed an anthropology of the lived experience based on a person-centred and empathic approach, and suggested 'resonance' as a reliable way of knowing our research interlocutors on their own terms. As a matter of fact, the sensory and emotional relations that we experience during fieldwork have contributed enormously to the understanding of our subject of study and to the construction of our ethnography (Fraser and Puwar 2008). Emotions have an essential role in building our field relations, in shaping our knowledge of them, and in redesigning our research approach. In light of this situation, I consider fieldwork not merely as an activity done in a geographical space but rather as an aesthetic practice, that is, a practice in which we understand others through our senses and our emotional engagement. But what do emotions do to the ethnographer herself?

In her book The *Vulnerable Observer*: *Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart* (1996), anthropologist Ruth Behar argued about the need for anthropologists to embrace their own emotional involvement in fieldwork. Behar brilliantly debunked the false and conventional idea that scientific credibility implies a detached and neutral observer. From then on, anthropologists have addressed their personal emotional experiences as a form of meaningful knowledge (Davies and Spencer 2010), acknowledging the transformative potential of teaching anthropology when emotions are embraced amongst the strengths of its qualitative method (Spencer 2011). A very engaging scholarship has explored the role of researchers' emotions in making sense of the phenomena they study and for the analysis and interpretation of the ethnographic data (Stodulka 2015; Stodulka et al. 2019). These works show how the ethnographic encounter is an inherent relational practice that inevitably arouses and is imbued with manifold affective dimensions. Students and early career scholars have largely discussed the importance of identifying how their own positionalities, biases and emotions impact the way they encounter and interact with their interlocutors in the field (Hovland 2007, 2009). Yet, the ethnographer's emotions are still excluded from the majority of methodological courses; they are treated with uncertainty and embarrassment, or are just silenced.

Do Not Take It for Granted: The Sense of Refusal

> *Saturday, 16 February 2013 [about a month after my fieldwork started]*
>
> *I'm trying to talk with someone, but parents don't seem to be available; they say that they are fed-up with researchers' questions . . . they are annoyed at having another researcher around, that's what a mother said. I feel like they are not recognizing my role . . . and why does everyone seem so*

disturbed by the idea that I'm doing this [research] if I'm neither a mom nor a relative [of an autistic autistic person]? They are asking 'how did it come to your mind if you have nothing to do with it?' . . . Am I missing the mark just because I'm not a parent?

One of the main duties of the APPDA is to provide services to people diagnosed with ASDs. These include access to early diagnosis and therapeutic intervention, special education support when inclusive programmes in regular school are inadequate, adult training courses (thanks to a Centre for Occupational Activities with room for around 60 people) and social housing in residential units. The association is also committed to raising disability awareness, fostering autistic people's civil rights and giving support to their relatives. During the first month of my fieldwork at the APPDA, parents conveyed a certain 'saturation point' towards researchers. It was as if they could not take it anymore: 'We're sick of answering the questionnaires!' said Francisca, a young mother of a four-year-old boy, referring to some online questionnaires that the APPDA secretariat use to send to families at the request of medical students. Similarly, Leonor, a mother of a six-year-old boy, complained that the questions collected by child psychology students failed to capture her own personality. If it is true that each autistic child is unique because of their distinct set of difficulties and abilities, the same can be said for their parents: 'We're all parents, we're all activists but each of us in our own way', she said. I was so distressed by the reluctance of the parents to be my interlocutors and by how they judged my profession as an anthropologist that I started to doubt the feasibility of my fieldwork.

When I began my research in early 2013, there were no anthropological studies or theses on autism and disability advocacy in Portugal. Disability studies is considered to be an 'almost non-existent' field in the country (Fontes et al. 2014: 6), and among social scientists only sociologists have so far explored disability-related issues such as social exclusion, poverty and employment policies (see Salvado 2012 for a review). Autism research was mainly

conducted by researchers coming from biomedical, psychological and educational sciences. So far, this has represented a global trend (Pellicano et al. 2014), but a different approach to autism has recently been advocated, one that promotes research about autistic people's self-defined needs and that addresses the issues which they and their allies face in society:

> We are entering a new era of autism research, an era characterised by a new commitment to equality of participation, an era in which the voices of those who participate in research in all kinds of ways will be listened to and taken seriously at every stage of the research process. (Pellicano et al. 2018: 83)

When I asked parents about the reasons for their lack of interest in being part of my network of interlocutors, they generally complained that they did not feel recognised by researchers as individuals with their own expertise about their children's symptoms, evolution and needs. Once I realised that I could rely on the distinctiveness of the anthropological approach to overcome the initial refusal of parents to participate in my research, a shift occurred. Addressing the reasons for their resistance gave me the opportunity to explain the distinctiveness of anthropology's qualitative methods, such as open-ended interviews and informal conversations, and to emphasise the importance of the ethnographic approach in giving attention to the individual. I therefore devoted the initial phase of my fieldwork entirely to building trust with the parents, especially to avoid reproducing a type of relationship that could be perceived by them as instrumental and unengaged. My explicit commitment to acknowledge their role as parents and especially their experience as disability activists was welcomed as proof of my willingness to cooperate in a spirit of mutual trust, as well as to mitigate some of the existing tensions against, and doubts about, the figure of the academic researcher. Moreover, considering that parents – and especially mothers – devote a considerable part of their time to childcare, basic agreements such as scheduling a meeting or interview (even a few

weeks in advance) seemed difficult to honour. This circumstance taught me the importance of incorporating a 'constant anticipation of contingency' into my know-how (Frederiksen 2008: 9). I have also used a diversified set of communication channels to adapt my data collection methods to the limited availability of parents for in-person meetings. The widespread use of Facebook inboxes, online chats, voicemails and text messages encouraged parents to engage in my research more readily and helped build a space for sharing through more impromptu conversations.

Parents were not only hesitant to have another researcher around but even sceptical about my interest in studying the autism advocacy community. As disability activists, parents look after their children, assuring and promoting their rights to healthcare, treatment and inclusive schooling, among other things. In light of this, they are familiar with disability legislation and often at the forefront of national initiatives demanding to address the social barriers, biased assumptions and harmful stereotypes facing people with disabilities. Advocacy gives parents the opportunity to be involved as active citizens in the broader disability rights movement, but along with pride and strength it also involves struggles and stress. On many occasions, the fact that I was a childless woman created an unpleasant tension, especially with mothers. I felt that expressions like 'only mothers know', 'I don't know if you can understand what I'm saying' and 'it's something you'll know when you've got a child' were creating a sense of distance between us as if mothers thought that I would not have been able to really understand what it meant to live with, take care of, and advocate for an autistic child. Mothers were constantly enquiring about the real motives behind my research in so far as I was neither a mother nor a relative of an autistic person. How could I prove to them that I was entitled to know about the movement? Was kinship a prerequisite for carrying out research on autism advocacy? Over time, being a woman – more than having or not having a child – proved to be a common starting point from which

to build rapport, which sometimes gave way to a complex and tricky emotional closeness.

To Share: Dealing with Distancing and Emotional Closeness

> *Thursday, 12 June 2014*
>
> *I'm supposed to be online only three or four hours a day and disconnect [from social networks] during the weekend, but it doesn't work, my fieldwork is kind of swallowing me up . . . today, I'm nervous because of the videos Laura sent me of her son Luis getting out of the shower and trying to dress by himself, and another one where he's completely devastated after an outburst . . . isn't it too intimate to share? It's too delicate! Should I define the limits of sharing? And what about Luis who knows nothing about all this?*
>
> *Monday, 23 March* 2015 [some days before the World Autism Awareness Day, 2 April]
>
> *I talked to C. and C. [my supervisors] because I think I need a break, I need to understand, I can't go on like this, I feel exhausted. I'm isolating myself from the parents, which is not so right, but they are soliciting me in a way that I can't handle emotionally. Am I being too sensitive? I should learn to be less porous; how can I become less porous?*

Many activist parents are members of online forums and Facebook-based autism advocacy groups. These virtual communities represent mutual-support environments that provide parents with new communicative possibilities and political affordances (boyd 2010; Hine 2008). Parents use these online platforms especially for advocacy purposes, such as raising awareness on disability rights and promoting autism-related events

and calls-to-action. I then conducted part of my research online[3] using participant observation, interviews and content analysis of the group's live interactions and communications. In some circumstances, online interactions with parents elicited some issues that I think are specific to the online realm of my fieldwork.

The first issue concerned the ON/OFF and the Anytime-Anywhere features of the Internet. I recall here a few side-effects of communicating online: a sudden Wi-Fi crash interrupting an intense conversation or disrupting the joy of a father sharing his child's school achievement made me and my interlocutors feel upset and frustrated. In contrast, the ability to be connected almost anytime/anywhere had some important implications for the way we felt in each other's presence. The perception of being constantly available to each other, for example, elicited very different feelings ranging from reassurance to fatigue and exhaustion. This also influenced some aspects of the research pace itself, notably the process of getting in and out of the field. Since online ethnography challenges the clear geographical boundaries of the field of observation, I often found myself suddenly thrown into fieldwork just because one of my interlocutors reached me on my mobile phone, or because I received a notification about a discussion of a relevant topic within a virtual advocacy group.

A second issue had to do with the possibility of sharing videos – via phone or computer – which allowed my interlocutors to have a pervasive and widespread presence in my daily life. Although this

3. At the beginning of my netnography (Kozinets 2010), I created a new Facebook profile to protect the anonymity and privacy of both parents and their children. This 'academic' profile reports my real name, that I was an anthropologist working on autism advocacy and that I was enrolled in a PhD programme.

circumstance allowed us to strengthen our relationship, it also led to an overwhelming degree of sharing. Laura, for example, one of the mothers with whom I am in contact to date, is an extrovert and a proactive woman, who from the beginning fearlessly shared with me her tough journey of being a mother of an autistic boy. João, who was five years old at the time of my research, is a non-verbal child who suffers meltdowns from being overwhelmed by sensory stimuli. Witnessing João's screams and lashing out was one of the most difficult episodes of my fieldwork. As Laura once said to me as I was leaving her house after a disruptive dinner: 'My son's autism is intriguing but it also hurts, and I want you to see both'. Laura kept sending me photos and videos of João struggling with his daily difficulties. Seeing him bite his hands and stiffen the muscles of his little body, becoming violent and dangerous to himself, made me sad, anxious and uncomfortable. Similarly, rejoicing at Laura's laughter at seeing her son serenely playing with his father or feeling proud of João's school achievements were equally significant moments of emotional contagion. Laura's story shows that our physical distance did not hinder our emotional closeness, nor did our virtual interactions turn into disembodied relationships (Costello et al. 2017).

During fieldwork, we and our interlocutors build an intimate and safe space moulded and nurtured by the materiality of our feelings and thoughts. In this space, we reinforce our relationship, strengthen our emotional ties and expand our mutual understanding. While this understanding gave my field experience a new outlook, it did not come without perils. Indeed, the degree of emotional closeness provided by video- and photo-sharing fostered unexpected levels of intimacy. In this respect, Ghassan Hage (2009) reflected on the emotional dimension of participant observation and argued that, even if by sharing certain emotions we get closer to our interlocutors, the method of participant observation has always required us to distance ourselves. The author called this specific emotional ambivalence generated by the ethnographic practice 'ethnographic vacillation' (2009: 61), something which has

accompanied me throughout my research. Parents' involvement in childcare elicits a wide range of emotions, from apprehension and uncertainty to self-confidence, tenacity and courage. Because of the mutual trust and closeness gained over several months of acquaintance, many parents – like Laura – used to send me photos and videos of their autistic children's daily lives and personal experiences. Deborah Chambers (2013) described this phenomenon as 'mediated intimacy' and argued how new modes of social interaction and public display techniques that have been enabled by digital communication technologies have contributed to new experiences and meanings of intimacy, friendship and identity. I do believe that doing (online) fieldwork elicits intimate and intense degrees of sharing and that embracing this feature of doing research is part of the ethnographer's duty as a listener. At the same time, and whenever I deemed it necessary, I have also confessed to parents that I was having difficulties in emotionally dealing with what I thought was an oversharing of private content about their children, an issue defined (not without controversy) as 'sharenting' (Steinberg 2017). By facing this unexpected intense level of sharing, I finally recognised the importance of continually calibrating my own spectrum of emotions alongside my immersion in the field. It is, indeed, a strength of the ethnographic method to 'capture the complexity and ambivalence of feelings that the encounter with otherness brings about' (Hage 2009: 62). In light of this, bringing our emotional baggage into the field is a fundamental prerequisite for creating and expanding our understanding of our research object.

Taking a Position: The Role of Political Emotions

> *Wednesday, 3 December 2014*
>
> *It's the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and I went with Irene to the meeting 'Sustainable Development: The Promise of Technology' organised by the INR [the Portuguese*

National Institute of Rehabilitation]. During the coffee break, Irene seems like a magnet, every parent we were stumbling upon started chatting with her until we formed a circle . . . we talked about the event's theme and what initiatives we could organise to raise awareness in a society that kept marginalizsng disabled people . . . I remember the red face and the trembling lips of a father venting against the government's deafness to parents' demands. He wants to gather a list of discrimination complaints, and he asked me to take part in this call to action by spreading the word to other parents I know and collecting their complaints.

The fieldnote above describes one of the ways in which advocate parents called me to take action or collaborate with them, as we both knew I could be of some help. In July of that same year, for instance, I had attended, with Irene, a one-day training course called 'Know How to Exercise Citizenship'. The course specifically aimed to help parents and educators deepen their knowledge of Article 5, Equality and Non-Discrimination, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNGA 2006) and the Portuguese Non-Discrimination Law based on disability (Assembleia da República 2006) and to provide participants with the know-how to fi le a discrimination complaint. Irene explained to me that she was particularly interested in the subject after the principal of her son's school recommended enrolling him in a special school following other parents' complaints about her son allegedly 'disturbing his colleagues and the normal execution of lessons'. I decided to attend the course with her as I was getting to know about many cases of abuse, harassment and bullying suffered by autistic children in school, and parents often asked for my support when it came to submitting a formal complaint to the accredited institutions. Parents' exposure of their emotions has a political purpose: they permeate their words, motivate their thoughts and actions, and bolster their visibility in society. Our conversations about civic engagement, social justice and the need for a more inclusive society have sharpened my understanding of autism

advocacy as a manifold of thoughts, aims and actions. Becoming a disability activist is not a natural consequence resulting from kinship (being a parent or relative of an autistic person), but is rather a process of learning grounded in a pedagogy that seeks to valorise diversity and transform unequal power structures.

The method of participant observation always entails involvement in people's lives. My positive response to parents' requests for me to take part in their calls to action or in spreading the news about advocacy meetings or calls via my acquaintance network offered a way to show my agreement with their viewpoints. An explicit political commitment to our interlocutors' claims or a clear statement about our political stance could prompt warnings about our research being closer to activism than real science. In this respect, I argue that while anthropology as an inherent 'activist approach' does not necessarily and automatically translate into activism (AndréJohnson 2020), we do need to pay attention to our interlocutors' thoughts about and expectations of our role and positionality as social scientists. Considering my fieldwork, the initial diffidence of parents often gives way to a rich exchange, which can sometimes be emotionally overwhelming. I took on board the challenge of getting affectively and politically enmeshed with the disability issue by acknowledging the importance of positioning myself and responding to parents' requests for collaboration. I have critically acknowledged my 'ability privilege' (Wolbring 2014) as a researcher and as a citizen and interrogated my feeling of anxiety about having been so far unaffected by disability issues. Was that anxiety the result of me coming to terms with my foregoing indifference to the rights of people with disabilities and thus to what I felt as complicity with a society that continues to oppress and marginalise them by putting barriers to the achievement of their civil rights? Or – as Hage (2009) brilliantly wrote – was it 'a reflection of my position as an intellectual: someone who, by definition, is a passive person watching events unfold with no capacity to practically bring about any change to them' (2009: 74)?

By embracing my emotional attachment to my interlocutors'

political claims, I refined my understanding of the impact and significance that emotions entail for the ethnographer's labour. Paying attention to parents' expectations about my own involvement with disability advocacy has been a way for me to prove that anthropology can actively contribute as a discipline to a deeper understanding of its research topics or even to a change of perspective on them. The relation of emotions and politics has already been explored by the so-called 'affective turn' perspective that, by borrowing Baruch Spinoza's notion of affect, considers emotions as forces changing one's capacity to act and think (Athanasiou et al. 2008; Clough 2007). This approach has allowed me to better understand the political value of emotions (Ahmed 2004) in parents' discourses and practices as advocates, as well as to recognise the 'epistemic value' of emotions for the ethnographic enterprise (Stodulka 2015). If advocacy means recognising and fighting against the dynamics of discrimination and oppression of marginalised populations, then I wanted to do my part as an anthropologist and contribute to understanding the persistence of school bullying, social and employment discrimination, stigma and infantilisation that people with disabilities still suffer in society, even if I knew that my work as an academic could not conflate with my interlocutors' fights and personal commitment with the autism cause. The emotional labour of fieldwork itself has broadened the range of my political concerns. In this sense, emotions are a tool for unveiling our own vulnerability and accounting for new ways of expressing ourselves. By capitalising on this exposure, we can throw a critical spotlight on our own affective realm and force ourselves to contemplate our present position as citizens with all of our flaws. When everything seems to have been laid bare, affectivity opens up a new perspective.

Embracing the Unexpected

In the introduction, I argued that the affective dimensions of fieldwork are still sketchily approached in anthropology's undergraduate programmes; for instance, methodology courses do not often address the implications of emotions in research and the researcher's emotional engagement with the field. Luckily there are some exceptions. The Scottish Training in Anthropological Research (STAR) consortium[4] founded in 2006 runs residential training courses in anthropology for postgraduate students and early career researchers and pairs pre- and post-fieldwork students so as to create spaces for talking about field experiences. Students and early career researchers have taken the initiative to open up the debate on this issue – see, for example, the special issue 'FieldworkSupport' in the *Anthropology Matters* journal (Hovland 2009) with an introduction authored by Amy Pollard (2009) where she addresses the difficulties that PhD anthropologists at three UK universities have faced during fieldwork and the challenges that their pre-fieldwork training has done little to prepare them for. Similarly, it is worth mentioning the recent line of anthropological research on emotion of the Berlin School of Affective Scholarship (Stodulka et al. 2018). At my institution, the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon, my colleagues and I have the opportunity to attend a year-round Research Seminar in Anthropology where we talk about and share the difficulties we are encountering in our respective research endeavours.

Methodological courses should contemplate follow-up support (before, during and after fieldwork has started), collaborative workshops gathering together colleagues with different career

4. http://www.san.ed.ac.uk/research/research_training/scottish_training_in_anthropological_research _star.

paths (from pre- and post-fieldwork students to postdoctoral researchers and tenured academics) who are eager to share their fieldwork experiences and the strategies they have implemented to overcome the emotional issues they have faced. This scenario can certainly help academics to acquire more confidence and emotionally focussed coping skills. In addition, it is important to mention how most PhD students and early career scholars face short-term contracts and job insecurity in academia, which, beyond increasing uncertainty about the future, have a huge impact on emotional stress levels during research.[5] Better support for early

5. In this text, I intentionally use the term 'early career scholars' instead of 'young scholars' as the latter often conceals paternalistic prejudices, forms of discrimination and precarious working conditions in academia. Due to both institutional power relations and the lack of a progressive career system, many scholars face a prolonged period of employment uncertainty. For recent graduates, the academic path is often marked by a chain of postdoctoral positions and short-term research grants or individual fellowships. As a result, while we struggle to broaden our research experience and build a publication record, this employment system grinds our future expectations into a time-consuming cycle of grant applications, which at best secures our income for the next few years. Job insecurity and uncertainty, combined with the intense competition in the academic system, can undermine our collegiality and collaborative initiatives, leading to an individualistic approach to research that risks further worsening our mental and psychological

career researchers will not prevent them from the unexpected, nor will it compromise the creative and unique potential of emotions in fieldwork. There is no kind of pre-field training that can make us 'safe' from emotions. The theory–practice divide is to some extent unresolvable: learning by doing is an irreplaceable step for the researcher's know-how. Instead of trying to tame this quality of fieldwork, we should accept these challenges and use them to question our ability to listen, interact and understand others. No matter how much we prepare, the moment we arrive in the field we will often feel unprepared. It is in this apparent paradox – on the one hand, the impossibility of being ready, and on the other, the ability of anthropology programmes to equip students for the affective dimensions and emotional impact of fieldwork experiences, to provide them with support networks, safe spaces for discussion, and better pastoral care from supervisors – that lies the most creative quality of fieldwork as a style of enquiry. In the end, we only come to understand our field when we emotionally engage with others – our research companions – and embrace the feelings of vulnerability and discomfort that this journey entails. Because of this particularity, fieldwork multiplies the possibility of the unexpected and proves to be an emotionally charged experience.

This relational nature of participant observation can also contribute to the broadening of the field of autism research by including intersubjectivity and emotional relationships as means of knowledge-gathering and collaboration. The subjectivity of research participants and the interactions and relationships between them and the researcher are often ignored or silenced

distress. The impact that these precarious conditions have on anthropologists at the beginning of their careers is therefore enormous and directly interferes with the experience of fieldwork.

in autism research dominated by scientific paradigms and notions of objectivity. In contrast, Des Fitzgerald (2013) has addressed the emotional narratives of neuroscientists working on the neurobiological causes of autism to highlight how research and laboratory practice involves strong emotional engagement. Joseph Long (2020), for instance, has suggested how the use of anthropology and participant observation as a method can provide social care practitioners a means to inform their own professional practice as well as to engage with autistic people.

Conclusion

In this article, I have argued that, overall, the recent rethinking on the affective dimensions of fieldwork and on the epistemological value of the ethnographer's emotions (see Stodulka et al. 2019 for a review) has not yet been reflected in a concrete change in the way anthropologists are trained, showing the inadequacy of academia in providing methodology courses and workshops adapted to the long-term challenges of fieldwork. Despite some exceptions, most anthropology programmes still lack methodology courses that specifically focus on the emotional implications of doing research. If these challenges are not well acknowledged in academic training, newly trained anthropologists will consequently underestimate them when embarking on their fieldwork journeys. Drawing from my own research with activist parents who belong to the autism advocacy movement, I have explored here how fieldwork arouses feelings of doubt, uncertainty, hesitation and vulnerability, and have shown that embracing the affective dimensions of fieldwork can be a powerful means of engagement with people. Experiencing both the unexpected prompt to devise constructive strategies and the sometimes awful and contradictory emotions that come as a result is part of the ambivalence inherent in participant observation as

a method: the pleasure and gratification that it produces are as salvific as the difficulties and failure that it brings.

8. Ethnography at an Impasse? Fieldwork Reflections During a Pandemic

Ethnography at an Impasse? Fieldwork Reflections During a Pandemic (2020)

Nina Teresa Kiderlin



As COVID-19 disrupts life for billions of people around the world, it also calls into question the very notion of fieldwork and compels us to reflect on the practices that we take for granted. In what follows, three PhD students explore how the pandemic is affecting our fieldwork, prompting us to consider alternative approaches to being in the field and doing ethnography while bodily distancing.

Elise Hjalmarson reflects on research ethics from her attic apartment in Madrid where she was in the early stages of participant recruitment and observation among Latin American migrants, notably Cubans and Ecuadorians.

Nina Teresa Kiderlin shelters-in-place in Chicago where she had just moved for a predoctoral fellowship at Northwestern University and to conduct research on development of transnational legal orders through public and private actors.

Sonja Ruud lives and conducts field research in Luxembourg. While studying the country's recent transition to fare-free public transportation, she explores ways to study mobility while being temporarily immobilised herself.

Together, we discuss emerging ethical concerns resulting from the unique physical risk that we now pose to each other, how technology might mediate our fieldwork interactions, and the shifting role of mobility in contemporary research practices.

Ethical Dilemmas, Old and New



The biomedical undercurrents of contemporary research ethics are well-documented. Ethical principles such as 'do no harm' and informed consent trace back to the abuse of marginalised, racialised, and incarcerated communities in medical experiments. As we wrestle with the potential biological risk that we now pose to our participants – and, indeed, they to us – we share the sense that our work has taken on unanticipated biomedical dimensions. The outbreak of COVID-19 and range of measures adopted in its wake also exacerbate inequalities, amplifying the risks for those of us interacting with groups that may not have access to health care, unemployment insurance, or other vital supports they require. Such considerations underscore the salience of reflexivity.

> "*COVID-19 may not discriminate, but neither does it place us equally at risk.*"

Our ability to mitigate our potential exposure is bolstered by our relative privilege as young white women with health insurance, no child-care obligations, and as citizens of Western/European states. From her apartment in Madrid, one of the outbreak's early epicentres, Elise is conscious that her own situation pales in comparison to that of many of her informants. Our field sites, while differentially affected, remain politically stable, insulating us from the worst social and economic effects of the present moment.

Although our field sites—macro and micro—vary, we are each

embroiled in unforeseen ethical debates, particularly around our presence in or withdrawal from public space. These are not decisions we confront for ourselves or our interlocutors alone, but for everyone who frequents these shared arenas. In Sonja's case, minimising time spent in public entails a retreat from the transit vehicles and hubs which were previously key sites for her ethnographic research. While public transportation in Luxembourg is still operational, she temporarily avoids using these spaces for research purposes in deference to those for whom public transit remains essential to their livelihoods.

As we consider a way forward, some of our ethical questions only time can answer. When will it be reasonably safe for us and our informants to continue in-person observation or interviews? As the outbreak slows and we reach for a 'new normal', how will we temper the ethical imperative to care for, respect, and protect our participants with the urgent need for informed policy solutions? How do we ensure that efforts to protect the most marginalised, both before and during the outbreak, do not result in their exclusion from important discussions about how to move forward as a society?

While there are additional ethical dilemmas to explore pertaining to the social, material, and spatial, we believe that there is merit to prioritising physical dimensions directly related to our health and safety—dimensions which prompt us to reconsider how to do ethnography while maintaining bodily distance.

Virtual Research

As researchers, some of our most pressing questions revolve around the communities we work with moving online. Recent work develops 'Netnography' and big data analysis, but the implications of COVID-19 reach extensively further than we imagined. Most online ethnography focuses on specific arenas of social life, such as bitcoin trading or gaming. Yet now, cyberspace is a site we all navigate through virtual research. This is not just an issue for seasoned scholars; the lack of training and knowledge of tools which facilitate ethnography online is prevalent across academic generations. The

three of us, having completed our prior studies in different countries, received limited training in online research, security, or safe data management/storage.

Mediating research through technological devices might be a source of concern, but it also presents opportunities. Video technology allows for invited glimpses into the private lives of our interlocutors, as well as for us to virtually enter each other's homes. Will this create intimacy and allow for further insights than would be possible by an interview in public or office space?

We must also educate ourselves on 'new' risks for participants online. Privacy concerns are ever more pressing in the wake of governments employing sophisticated technological surveillance techniques to combat COVID-19. Whilst these might be needed to contain the spread, we should avoid becoming complicit in these practices, particularly given anthropology's colonial history. 'Observing' people online creates issues of possible metadata analysis, data protection, and traceability, as well as security concerns in online interactions, especially with marginalised communities or those at risk.

> *"To offer our participants anything resembling 'informed consent' and confidentiality, we must know what we are asking people to consent to and the limits of anonymity we can offer online."*

While keen to make use of the technological resources available to us, we remain uncertain about some of their ramifications for our fieldwork. Affinity, trust, and the comfort to speak freely may not be so easily established virtually. Will phone or video calls permit us to broach the same topics with our interlocutors, including the personal, intimate, or taboo? Confined to our homes alongside family and other relations, do we have sufficient privacy to engage virtually with our interlocutors? Nina recruits interviewees via snowball sampling and wonders about building rapport with individuals she meets solely online. Is ethnographic bonding as effective via virtual channels? Both Elise and Nina are hesitant to schedule interviews in a time of personal upheaval, while Sonja has

found her participants remain eager to share their experiences via virtual interviews.

Social life and interactions with research communities are shifting fundamentally through COVID-19. We avoid each other on the sidewalk and in the aisles of supermarkets – how will this behaviour translate to cyber interactions? Given the option, will our participants opt for virtual over in-person interviews? How might the mediation of technological devices, our inability to observe body language, or gauge inferred meanings influence our work?



Fieldwork (Im)mobility

While temporarily immobilised during this time – albeit to different degrees – we are all acutely aware of the centrality of mobility to our research practices. For many anthropologists, mobility is not just a methodological staple but part and parcel of our shared disciplinary identity.

Many researchers' travel plans are disrupted by the pandemic, while others who already traveled to a field site only to be confined to their apartments must now decide whether or how long to stay.

"The ability to leave – or even to contemplate leaving – is undoubtedly a privilege."

Each of the three of us inhabit multiple geographies, between our university in Switzerland, our home countries, and our field sites. Nina and Elise are both debating whether to stay in their field sites, a process which entails a comparative evaluation of different locales. Our uncertainty about how long this period will last complicates such decisions. Yet we are also aware that most people – including, perhaps, many of our participants – do not have options to weigh. Elise's personal decision-making is complicated by her awareness of her interlocutors' immobility, some of whom are no longer in Spain by choice but seek to participate in voluntary return programs – sometimes referred to as 'soft- deportation' – as a means of going back to their countries of origin.

Unlike her colleagues, Sonja is conducting field research in the place where she was already living, sparing her the tough decision of whether to stay or go. However, mobility is critical to her research on public transportation in Luxembourg, in both thematic and methodological terms. Prior to being confined to her apartment, she spent much of her time in transit: conducting participant observation in buses, trains, and trams and traveling around the country for interviews. Now, she is increasingly dependent on mobile technologies to maintain contact with interlocutors and to follow transport developments via news and social media.

"As we each adapt to changing circumstances, we wonder how these experiences of immobility may affect ethnographic practices."

Will more researchers be inspired to explore possibilities for fieldwork at a distance, or will we become further convinced of the importance of moving our own bodies in order to be physically present with our interlocutors? Many of us, in our personal lives, are increasingly conscious of how the carbon emissions produced by our mobilities contribute to climate change. Yet we are slower to think collectively and reflexively about the centrality of mobility to our methodologies. While none of the authors argue that anthropologists should no longer travel beyond their home cities or

countries, we contend that it is time to think critically about our modes and rates of travel—for fieldwork as well as conferences.

Uncharted Territory

Despite feeling that our fieldwork plans are at an impasse, there is no doubt that we are still practicing ethnography in our everyday lives. In our varied situations, we continue to wrestle with how to do ethnography while practicing bodily distancing. Will virtual communication prove a poor replacement for in-person interactions, hindering ethnographic bonding?

"In the meantime, how can we ensure that the safety of our interlocutors – not to mention our own health – takes precedence over institutional timeframes, supervisory expectations, career goals, and our own funding and academic deadlines?"



The present moment also reveals a need for 'reskilling'. In preparing for fieldwork, none of us anticipated anything like this, and therefore lack a contingency plan to shift our research away from in-person interactions. While we cannot predict the arrival of the next pandemic, these experiences may change how we prepare for and conduct fieldwork as we expand our knowledge of technological and methodological tools. It is also critical that we create and maintain social safety nets, as researchers arriving in field sites distinct from their permanent homes are rendered more vulnerable by their social isolation.

Yet we are also heartened to see the novel ways in which people around the world are reaching out to one another during this time, to maintain and strengthen social ties across new distances. For instance, our cohort sustains close contact via regular video calls and is undertaking new collaborative projects. Some of us are in frequent contact with our key interlocutors, practicing mutuality and care through virtual forums where possible.

"We wonder: will our shared experiences of having lived (together, yet apart) through the multiple crises generated by COVID-19 contribute to further breaking down the divide between researcher and participant, or 'insider' and 'outsider'? Will it create new common ground, bridge gaps, or build solidarity across otherwise fragmented communities?"

When the dust settles, will new forms of political allyship emerge? What opportunities might these produce for fieldwork?

Some things are clear: 2019 and the world pre-coronavirus are already far behind us. As field researchers in these uncertain times, we are navigating uncharted territory.

9. Black Anthropology

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.openeducationalberta.ca/anth/?p=321#oembed-1

An conversation between the chapter author (Julisha Roache) and one of the editors (Alyssa White) about Black anthropology, erasure, the personal aspects of fieldwork, and Julisha's Honor's Thesis, "I don't really have a choice": The Complexities of Being Black in Canada for the Caribbean Diaspora.

Black Anthropology

Julisha Roache ('22, Anthropology)



Black anthropologists have made significant contributions to Anthropology since its inception. These scholars often worked alongside key figures in the discipline such as Franz Boas and Bronislaw Malinowski; however they have also made significant contributions of their own to the field. Zora Neale Hurston, who was a student of Franz Boas, was an important scholar in early anthropology and innovated the ways that researchers approached ethnography. Hurston's book *Mules and Men* examines how African American folktales were being used to express beliefs on Hoodoo and the connection that these stories had to African culture and traditions. Her ethnographic methods consisted of a completely immersive form of participant observation. She also incorporated her literary background in her ethnographic writing which placed a strong emphasis on the importance of narratives (Salamone, 2014). She was one of the first Black female anthropologists and paved the way for the researchers who came after her.

There were many other Black anthropologists who made strides in early anthropology, especially cultural anthropology. Allison Davis was an anthropologist in the 1900's whose work in the American South examines class differences between Black and White communities. In his book "Deep South", he concludes that America is operating under a caste system based on race and highlights how racism is foundational to its social institutions. He was also interested in education and argued that education is impacted by class, race, and culture, which results in White middle class frameworks and perspectives being foundational. This creates discrepancies between students based on social class and impacts student learning (Hills, 1995).



St. Clair Drake

Sir Clair Drake was an anthropologist that was also interested in notions of race and used anthropology to further his own activism. He believed that anthropology was a discipline that could generate social change and be used as a tool towards the liberation of Black people (Jordan, 1990). His work reflected this idea and aimed to challenge the idea that Africa was an uncivilized place, which was prevalent at the time. The work of both of these scholars aimed at examining structures of inequality and focused on the intersections between race, class and gender in their analysis (Daniels, 2000). Their contributions to cultural anthropology showed the importance of taking into account power in analysis and highlighted the ways in which Black anthropologists have historically used their research to achieve social change.

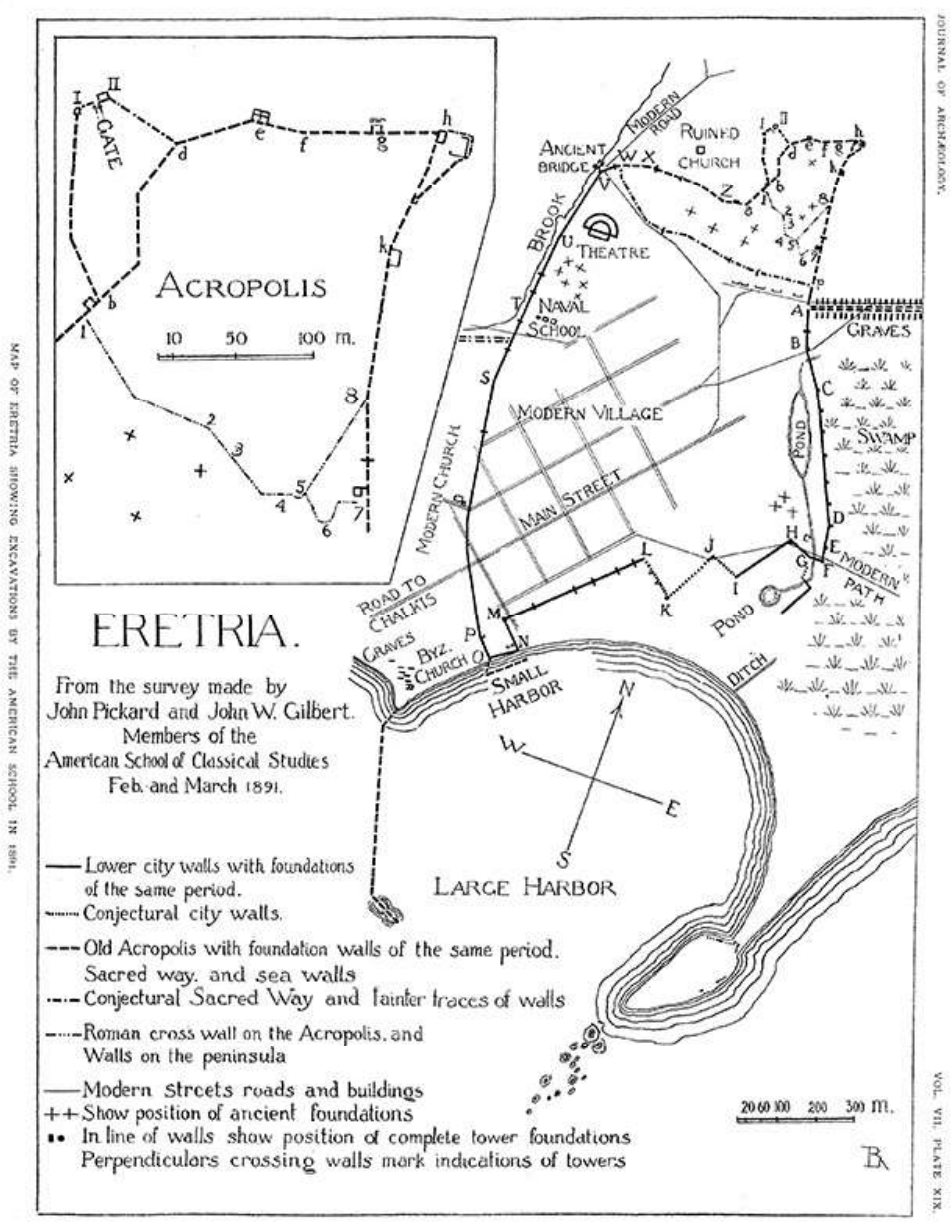


Caroline Bond Day

However there were many contributions in other subfields of Anthropology as well. Caroline Bond Day was a trailblazer in physical anthropology for the way that she challenged notions of race and racial inferiority. Her work consisted of the documentation of the experiences of mixed raced individuals, most of which included her own family and friends. In her thesis " "A Study of Some Negro-White

Families in the United States", she found that although mixed children of Black and White interracial couples were considered to be Black in the US, they lived similarly to White middle-class individuals. She also found that many of the mixed individuals were physically indistinguishable from other White people, which challenged the idea of strict racial categories. Not only did her work challenge the scientific racism prevalent at the time but it showed the value of doing insider ethnography because she was able to easily gain access to the community that a White anthropologist could not have at the time (Curwood, 2012).

In archaeology, John Wesley Gilbert is considered to be one of the first African American archaeologists and received a Master's in archaeology at Brown University in 1891. His focus was on Greek archaeology and he studied in Greece where he worked with a team of other researchers to create a topological map of the ancient city of Eritrea (Ronnick, 2001).



Map of Eretria based on survey work from John Wesley Gilbert

Mark Hanna Watkins was a linguist who specialized in African languages and wrote a grammar of a Bantu language called Chichewa in 1933. The grammar examined aspects of the language such as morphology and syntax and took an innovative approach

through his incorporation of structuralist methods (Wade-Lewis, 2004). All of these scholars played an important role in shaping the discipline and their legacies can still be felt today.



Mark Hanna Watkins

References

Curwood, A. C. (2012). Caroline Bond Day (1889-1948): A black woman outsider within physical anthropology. *Transforming Anthropology*, 20(1), 79–89. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-7466.2011.01145.x

Daniels, T. P. (2000). Ruminations of du bois, Davis and

drake. *Transforming Anthropology*, 9(1), 30–43. https://doi.org/10.1525/tran.2000.9.1.30

Hillis, M. R. (1995). Allison Davis and the Study of Race, Social Class, and Schooling. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 64(1), 33–41. https://doi.org/10.2307/2967282

Jordan, G. (1990). On being a committed intellectual: St Clair Drake and the politics of anthropology. *Transforming Anthropology*, 1(2), 15-18. https://doi.org/10.1525/tran.1990.1.2.15

Remy, A. (1976). ANTHROPOLOGY: FOR WHOM AND WHAT? *The Black Scholar*, 7(7), 12–16. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41066011

Ronnick, M. V. (2001). John Wesley Gilbert ca. 1864-1923. *The Classical Outlook*, 78(3), 113–114. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43938451

Salamone, F. A. (2014). His eyes were watching her. Papa Franz Boas, Zora Neale Hurston, and anthropology. *Anthropos*, 109(1), 217–224. https://doi.org/10.5771/0257-9774-2014-1-217

PART IV

CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

10. Language

"Language"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Linda Light (Linda.Light@csulb.edu)

Key Takeaways – Calista W. (Anthropology 1000 2022)

This chapter is about the importance of language in the way that it relates to culture, the biological differences between humans and other animals that allow for our language to be more complex, the universal similarities between human languages, and the structural differences and similarities in human languages. Some important concepts include:

- Symbolic systems of human language, which is how symbols are used to convey meaning.
- Noam Chomsky's controversial concept of

Universal Grammar (UG), explaining how human children acquire language from a basic language template embedded in our genes.

- Closed vs. open systems of language, describing whether new meanings and messages can be created.
- Non-verbal human communication systems, including kinesics, proxemics, and paralanguage.
- Structures of languages, including phonemes, morphemes, and syntax.

The most important concept to take away from this reading is also the most challenging. This concept is the way that language is related to culture, in that complex human culture could not exist without language and vice versa. This is challenging as it is a difficult idea to wrap your head around since there are so many ways in which culture and language are connected. This concept ties into everything that has been taught this far as we have learned it all through language. Specifically, chapters 8 and 9, political anthropology and economics, are closely related to this chapter as those concepts are all created by human language.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN LANGUAGE TO HUMAN CULTURE

Students in my cultural anthropology classes are required to memorize a six-point thumbnail definition of culture, which

includes all of the features most anthropologists agree are key to its essence. Then, I refer back to the definition as we arrive at each relevant unit in the course. Here it is—with the key features in bold type.

Culture is:

1. An integrated system of mental elements (beliefs, values, worldview, attitudes, norms), the behaviors motivated by those mental elements, and the material items created by those behaviors;
2. A system shared by the members of the society;
3. 100 percent learned, not innate;
4. Based on symbolic systems, the most important of which is language;
5. Humankind's most important adaptive mechanism, and
6. Dynamic, constantly changing.

This definition serves to underscore the crucial importance of language to all human cultures. In fact, human language can be considered a culture's most important feature since complex human culture could not exist without language and language could not exist without culture. They are inseparable because language encodes culture and provides the means through which culture is shared and passed from one generation to the next. Humans think in language and do all cultural activities using language. It surrounds

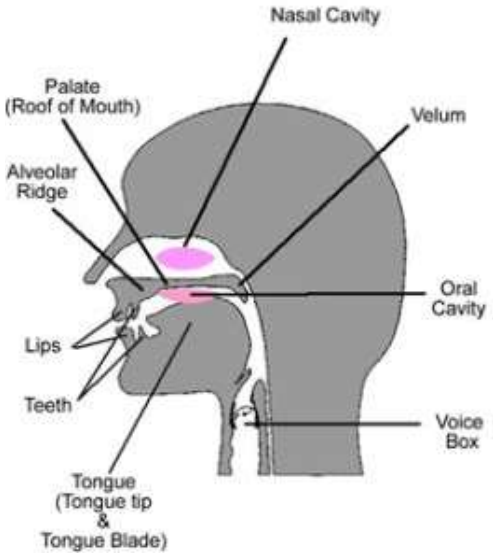
our every waking and sleeping moments, although we do not usually think about its importance. For that matter, humans do not think about their immersion in culture either, much as fish, if they were endowed with intelligence, would not think much about the water that surrounds them. Without language and culture, humans would be just another great ape. Anthropologists must have skills in linguistics so they can learn the languages and cultures of the people they study.

All human languages are symbolic systems that make use of symbols to convey meaning. A symbol is anything that serves to refer to something else, but has a meaning that cannot be guessed because there is no obvious connection between the symbol and its referent. This feature of human language is called arbitrariness. For example, many cultures assign meanings to certain colors, but the meaning for a particular color may be completely different from one culture to another. Western cultures like the United States use the color black to represent death, but in China it is the color white that symbolizes death. White in the United States symbolizes purity and is used for brides' dresses, but no Chinese woman would ever wear white to her wedding. Instead, she usually wears red, the color of good luck. Words in languages are symbolic in the same way. The word *key* in English is pronounced exactly the same as the word *qui* in French, meaning "who," and *ki* in Japanese, meaning "tree." One must learn the language in order to know what any word means.

THE BIOLOGICAL BASIS OF LANGUAGE

The human anatomy that allowed the development of language emerged six to seven million years ago when the first human ancestors became bipedal—habitually walking on two feet. Most

other mammals are quadrupedal—they move about on four feet. This evolutionary development freed up the forelimbs of human ancestors for other activities, such as carrying items and doing more and more complex things with their hands. It also started a chain of anatomical adaptations. One adaptation was a change in the way the skull was placed on the spine. The skull of quadrupedal animals is attached to the spine at the back of the skull because the head is thrust forward. With the new upright bipedal position of pre-humans, the attachment to the spine moved toward the center of the base of the skull. This skeletal change in turn brought about changes in the shape and position of the mouth and throat anatomy.



Human Articulatory Anatomy

Humans have all the same organs in the mouth and throat that the other great apes have, but the larynx, or voice box (you may know it as the Adam's apple), is in a lower position in the throat in humans. This creates a longer pharynx, or throat cavity, which functions as a resonating and amplifying chamber for the speech sounds emitted by the larynx. The rounding of the shape of the tongue and palate, or the roof of the mouth, enables humans to make a greater variety of sounds than any great ape is capable of making.

Speech is produced by exhaling air from the lungs, which passes through the larynx. The voice is created by the vibration of the vocal folds in the larynx when they are pulled tightly together, leaving a narrow slit for the air to pass through under pressure. The narrower the slit, the higher the pitch of the sound produced. The sound waves in the exhaled air pass through the pharynx then out through the mouth and/or the nose. The different positions and movements

of the articulators—the tongue, the lips, the jaw—produce the different speech sounds.

Along with the changes in mouth and throat anatomy that made speech possible came a gradual enlargement and compartmentalization of the brain of human ancestors over millions of years. The modern human brain is among the largest, in proportion to body size, of all animals. This development was crucial to language ability because a tremendous amount of brain power is required to process, store, produce, and comprehend the complex system of any human language and its associated culture. In addition, two areas in the left brain are specifically dedicated to the processing of language; no other species has them. They are Broca's area in the left frontal lobe near the temple, and Wernicke's area, in the temporal lobe just behind the left ear.

Language Acquisition in Childhood

Linguist Noam Chomsky proposed that all languages share the properties of what he called Universal Grammar (UG), a basic template for all human languages, which he believed was embedded in our genes, hard-wiring the brains of all human children to acquire language. Although the theory of UG is somewhat controversial, it is a fact that all normally developing human infants have an innate ability to acquire the language or languages used around them. Without any formal instruction, children easily acquire the sounds, words, grammatical rules, and appropriate social functions of the language(s) that surround them. They master the basics by about age three or four. This also applies to children, both deaf and hearing, who are exposed to signed language.

If a child is not surrounded by people who are using a language, that child will gradually lose the ability to acquire language naturally without effort. If this deprivation continues until puberty, the child will no longer be biologically capable of attaining native fluency

in any language, although they might be able to achieve a limited competency. This phenomenon has been called the Critical Age Range Hypothesis. A number of abused children who were isolated from language input until they were past puberty provide stark evidence to support this hypothesis. The classic case of "Genie" is an example of this evidence.[1]

Found at the age of almost 14, Genie had been confined for all of her life to her room and, since the age of two, had been tied to a potty chair during the day and to a crib at night with almost no verbal interaction and only minimal attention to her physical needs. After her rescue, a linguist worked with her intensively for about five years in an attempt to help her learn to talk, but she never achieved language competence beyond that of a two-year old child. The hypothesis also applies to the acquisition of a second language. A person who starts the study of another language after puberty will have to exert a great deal of effort and will rarely achieve native fluency, especially in pronunciation. There is plenty of evidence for this in the U.S. educational system. You might very well have had this same experience. It makes you wonder why our schools rarely offer foreign language classes before the junior high school level.

The Gesture Call System and Non-Verbal Human Communication

All animals communicate and many animals make meaningful sounds. Others use visual signs, such as facial expressions, color changes, body postures and movements, light (fireflies), or electricity (some eels). Many use the sense of smell and the sense

1. [2]
2. [1]

of touch. Most animals use a combination of two or more of these systems in their communication, but their systems are closed systems in that they cannot create new meanings or messages. Human communication is an open system that can easily create new meanings and messages. Most animal communication systems are basically innate; they do not have to learn them, but some species' systems entail a certain amount of learning. For example, songbirds have the innate ability to produce the typical songs of their species, but most of them must be taught how to do it by older birds.

Great apes and other primates have relatively complex systems of communication that use varying combinations of sound, body language, scent, facial expression, and touch. Their systems have therefore been referred to as a gesture-call system. Humans share a number of forms of this gesture-call, or non-verbal system with the great apes. Spoken language undoubtedly evolved embedded within it. All human cultures have not only verbal languages, but also non-verbal systems that are consistent with their verbal languages and cultures and vary from one culture to another. We will discuss the three most important human non-verbal communication systems.

Kinesics

Kinesics is the term used to designate all forms of human body language, including gestures, body position and movement, facial expressions, and eye contact. Although all humans can potentially perform these in the same way, different cultures may have different rules about how to use them. For example, eye contact for Americans is highly valued as a way to show we are paying attention and as a means of showing respect. But for the Japanese, eye contact is usually inappropriate, especially between two people of different social statuses. The lower status person must look down and avoid eye contact to show respect for the higher status person.

Facial expressions can convey a host of messages, usually related

to the person's attitude or emotional state. Hand gestures may convey unconscious messages, or constitute deliberate messages that can replace or emphasize verbal ones.

Proxemics

Proxemics is the study of the social use of space, specifically the distance an individual tries to maintain around himself in interactions with others. The size of the "space bubble" depends on a number of social factors, including the relationship between the two people, their relative status, their gender and age, their current attitude toward each other, and above all their culture. In some cultures, such as in Brazil, people typically interact in a relatively close physical space, usually along with a lot of touching. Other cultures, like the Japanese, prefer to maintain a greater distance with a minimum amount of touching or none at all. If one person stands too far away from the other according to cultural standards, it might convey the message of emotional distance. If a person invades the culturally recognized space bubble of another, it could mean a threat. Or, it might show a desire for a closer relationship. It all depends on who is involved.

Paralanguage

Paralanguage refers to those characteristics of speech beyond the actual words spoken. These include the features that are inherent to all speech: pitch, loudness, and tempo or duration of the sounds. Varying pitch can convey any number of messages: a question, sarcasm, defiance, surprise, confidence or lack of it, impatience, and many other often subtle connotations. An utterance that is shouted at close range usually conveys an emotional element, such

as anger or urgency. A word or syllable that is held for an undue amount of time can intensify the impact of that word. For example, compare "It's beautiful" versus It's beauuuuu-tiful!" Often the latter type of expression is further emphasized by extra loudness of the syllable, and perhaps higher pitch; all can serve to make a part of the utterance more important. Other paralinguistic features that often accompany speech might be a chuckle, a sigh or sob, deliberate throat clearing, and many other non-verbal sounds like "hm," "oh," "ah," and "um."

Most non-verbal behaviors are unconsciously performed and not noticed unless someone violates the cultural standards for them. In fact, a deliberate violation itself can convey meaning. Other non-verbal behaviors are done consciously like the U.S. gestures that indicate approval, such as thumbs up, or making a circle with your thumb and forefinger—"OK." Other examples are waving at someone or putting a forefinger to your lips to quiet another person. Many of these deliberate gestures have different meanings (or no meaning at all) in other cultures. For example, the gestures of approval in U.S. culture mentioned above may be obscene or negative gestures in another culture.

UNIVERSALS OF LANGUAGE

Languages we do not speak or understand may sound like meaningless babble to us, but all the human languages that have ever been studied by linguists are amazingly similar. They all share a number of characteristics, which linguists call language universals. These language universals can be considered properties of the Universal Grammar that Chomsky proposed. Here is a list of some of the major ones.

1. All human cultures have a human language and use it to communicate.

2. All human languages change over time, a reflection of the fact that all cultures are also constantly changing.
3. All languages are systematic, rule driven, and equally complex overall, and equally capable of expressing any idea that the speaker wishes to convey. There are no primitive languages.
4. All languages are symbolic systems.
5. All languages have a basic word order of elements, like subject, verb, and object, with variations.
6. All languages have similar basic grammatical categories such as nouns and verbs.
7. Every spoken language is made up of discrete sounds that can be categorized as vowels or consonants.
8. The underlying structure of all languages is characterized by the feature duality of patterning, which permits any speaker to utter any message they need or wish to convey, and any speaker of the same language to understand the message.

DESCRIPTIVE LINGUISTICS: STRUCTURES OF LANGUAGE

The study of the structures of language is called descriptive linguistics. Descriptive linguists discover and describe the phonemes of a language, research called phonology. They study the lexicon (the vocabulary) of a language and how the morphemes are used to create new words, or morphology. They analyze the rules by which speakers create phrases and sentences, or the study of syntax. And they look at how these features all combine to convey

meaning in certain social contexts, fields of study called semantics and pragmatics.

The Sounds of Language: Phonemes

A phoneme is defined as the minimal unit of sound that can make a difference in meaning if substituted for another sound in a word that is otherwise identical. The phoneme itself does not carry meaning. For example, in English if the sound we associate with the letter "p" is substituted for the sound of the letter "b" in the word bit, the word's meaning is changed because now it is pit, a different word with an entirely different meaning. The human articulatory anatomy is capable of producing many hundreds of sounds, but no language has more than about 100 phonemes. English has about 36 or 37 phonemes, including about eleven vowels, depending on dialect. Hawaiian has only five vowels and about eight consonants. No two languages have the same exact set of phonemes.

Linguists use a written system called the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to represent the sounds of a language. Unlike the letters of our alphabet that spell English words, each IPA symbol always represents only one sound no matter the language. For example, the letter "a" in English can represent the different vowel sounds in such words as *cat*, *make*, *papa*, *law*, etc., but the IPA symbol */a/* always and only represents the vowel sound of *papa* or *pop*.

The Units That Carry Meaning: Morphemes

A morpheme is a minimal unit of meaning in a language; a morpheme cannot be broken down into any smaller units that still relate to the original meaning. It may be a word that can stand

alone, called an unbound morpheme (*dog*, *happy*, *go*, *educate*). Or it could be any part of a word that carries meaning that cannot stand alone but must be attached to another morpheme, bound morphemes. They may be placed at the beginning of the root word, such as *un–* ("not," as in *unhappy*), or *re–* ("again," as in *rearrange*). Or, they may follow the root, as in *-ly* (makes an adjective into an adverb: *quickly* from *quick*), *-s* (for plural, possessive, or a verb ending) in English. Some languages, like Chinese, have very few if any bound morphemes. Others, like Swahili have so many that nouns and verbs cannot stand alone as separate words; they must have one or more other bound morphemes attached to them.

The Structure of Phrases and Sentences: Syntax

Rules of syntax tell the speaker how to put morphemes together grammatically and meaningfully. There are two main types of syntactic rules: rules that govern word order, and rules that direct the use of certain morphemes that perform a grammatical function. For example, the order of words in the English sentence "The cat chased the dog" cannot be changed around or its meaning would change: "The dog chased the cat" (something entirely different) or "Dog cat the chased the" (something meaningless). English relies on word order much more than many other languages do because it has so few morphemes that can do the same type of work.

For example, in our sentence above, the phrase "the cat" must go first in the sentence, because that is how English indicates the subject of the sentence, the one that does the action of the verb. The phrase "the dog" must go after the verb, indicating that it is the dog that received the action of the verb, or is its object. Other syntactic rules tell us that we must put "the" before its noun, and "–ed" at the end of the verb to indicate past tense. In Russian, the same sentence has fewer restrictions on word order because it has bound morphemes that are attached to the nouns to indicate

which one is the subject and which is the object of the verb. So the sentence *koshka [chased] sobaku*, which means "the cat chased the dog," has the same meaning no matter how we order the words, because the *–a* on the end of *koshka* means the cat is the subject, and the *–u* on the end of *sobaku* means the dog is the object. If we switched the endings and said *koshku [chased] sobaka*, now it means the dog did the chasing, even though we haven't changed the order of the words. Notice, too, that Russian does not have a word for "the."

Conveying Meaning in Language: Semantics and Pragmatics

The whole purpose of language is to communicate meaning about the world around us so the study of meaning is of great interest to linguists and anthropologists alike. The field of semantics focuses on the study of the meanings of words and other morphemes as well as how the meanings of phrases and sentences derive from them. Recently linguists have been enjoying examining the multitude of meanings and uses of the word "like" among American youth, made famous through the film *Valley Girl* in 1983. Although it started as a feature of California English, it has spread all across the country, and even to many young second-language speakers of English. It's, like, totally awesome dude!

The study of pragmatics looks at the social and cultural aspects of meaning and how the context of an interaction affects it. One aspect of pragmatics is the speech act. Any time we speak we are performing an act, but what we are actually trying to accomplish with that utterance may not be interpretable through the dictionary meanings of the words themselves. For example, if you are at the dinner table and say, "Can you pass the salt?" you are probably not asking if the other person is capable of giving you the salt. Often the more polite an utterance, the less direct it will be syntactically. For

example, rather than using the imperative syntactic form and saying "Give me a cup of coffee," it is considered more polite to use the question form and say "Would you please give me a cup of coffee?"

LANGUAGE VARIATION: SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Languages Versus Dialects

The number of languages spoken around the world is somewhat difficult to pin down, but we usually see a figure between 6,000 and 7,000. Why are they so hard to count? The term language is commonly used to refer to the idealized "standard" of a variety of speech with a name, such as English, Turkish, Swedish, Swahili, or Urdu. One language is usually considered to be incomprehensible to speakers of another one. The word dialect is often applied to a subordinate variety of a language and the common assumption is that we can understand someone who speaks another dialect of our own language.

These terms are not really very useful to describe actual language variation. For example, many of the hundreds of "dialects" spoken in China are very different from each other and are not mutually comprehensible to speakers of other Chinese "dialects." The Chinese government promotes the idea that all of them are simply variants of the "Chinese language" because it helps to promote national solidarity and loyalty among Chinese people to their country and reduce regional factionalism. In contrast, the languages of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway are considered separate languages, but actually if a Swede, a Dane, and a Norwegian were to have a conversation together, each could use their own language and understand most of what the others say. Does this make them

dialects or languages? The Serbian and Croatian languages are considered by their speakers to be separate languages due to distinct political and religious cultural identities. They even employ different writing systems to emphasize difference, but they are essentially the same and easily understandable to each other.

So in the words of linguist John McWhorter, actually "dialects is all there is."[3] What he means by this is that a continuum of language variation is geographically distributed across populations in much the same way that human physical variation is, with the degree of difference between any two varieties increasing across increasing distances. This is the case even across national boundaries. Catalan, the language of northeastern Spain, is closer to the languages of southern France, Provençal and Occitan than any one is to its associated national language, Spanish or French. One language variety blends with the next geographically like the colors of the rainbow. However, the historical influence of colonizing states has affected that natural distribution. Thus, there is no natural "language" with variations called "dialects." Usually one variety of a language is considered the "standard," but this choice is based on the social and political prestige of the group that speaks that variety; it has no inherent superiority over the other variants called its "dialects." The way people speak is an indicator of who they are, where they come from, and what social groups they identify with, as well as what particular situation they find themselves in, and what they want to accomplish with a specific interaction.

How Does Language Variation Develop?

Why do people from different regions in the United States speak

3. [4]
4. [3]

so differently? Why do they speak differently from the people of England? A number of factors have influenced the development of English dialects, and they are typical causes of dialect variation in other languages as well.

Settlement patterns: The first English settlers to North America brought their own dialects with them. Settlers from different parts of the British Isles spoke different dialects (they still do), and they tended to cluster together in their new homeland. The present-day dialects typical of people in various areas of the United States, such as New England, Virginia, New Jersey, and Delaware, still reflect these original settlement sites, although they certainly have changed from their original forms.

Migration routes: After they first settled in the United States, some people migrated further west, establishing dialect boundaries as they traveled and settled in new places.

Geographical factors: Rivers, mountains, lakes and islands affected migration routes and settlement locations, as well as the relative isolation of the settlements. People in the Appalachian mountains and on certain islands off the Atlantic coast were relatively isolated from other speakers for many years and still speak dialects that sound very archaic compared with the mainstream.

Language contact: Interactions with other language groups, such as Native Americans, French, Spanish, Germans, and African-Americans, along paths of migration and settlement resulted in mutual borrowing of vocabulary, pronunciation, and some syntax.

Have you ever heard of "Spanglish"? It is a form of Spanish spoken near the borders of the United States that is characterized by a number of words adopted from English and incorporated into the phonological, morphological and syntactic systems of Spanish. For example, the Spanish sentence *Voy a estationar mi camioneta*, or "I'm going to park my truck" becomes in Spanglish *Voy a parquear mi troca*. Many other languages have such English-flavored versions, including Franglais and Chinglish. Some countries, especially France, actively try to prevent the incursion of other languages (especially English) into their language, but the effort is

always futile. People will use whatever words serve their purposes, even when the "language police" disapprove. Some Franglais words that have invaded in spite of the authorities protestations include the recently acquired *binge-drinking*, *beach*, *e-book*, and *drop-out*, while older ones include *le weekend* and *stop*.

Region and occupation: Rural farming people may continue to use archaic expressions compared with urban people, who have much more contact with contemporary life styles and diverse speech communities.

Social class: Social status differences cut across all regional variations of English. These differences reflect the education and income level of speakers.

Group reference: Other categories of group identity, including ethnicity, national origin of ancestors, age, and gender can be symbolized by the way we speak, indicating in-group versus out-group identity. We talk like other members of our groups, however we define that group, as a means of maintaining social solidarity with other group members. This can include occupational or interest-group jargon, such as medical or computer terms, or surfer talk, as well as pronunciation and syntactic variations. Failure to make linguistic accommodation to those we are speaking to may be interpreted as a kind of symbolic group rejection even if that dialect might be relatively stigmatized as a marker of a disrespected minority group. Most people are able to use more than one style of speech, also called register, so that they can adjust depending on who they are interacting with: their family and friends, their boss, a teacher, or other members of the community.

Linguistic processes: New developments that promote the simplification of pronunciation or syntactic changes to clarify meaning can also contribute to language change.

These factors do not work in isolation. Any language variation is the result of a number of social, historical, and linguistic factors that might affect individual performances collectively and therefore dialect change in a particular speech community is a process that is continual.

What Is a "Standard" Variety of a Language?

The standard of any language is simply one of many variants that has been given special prestige in the community because it is spoken by the people who have the greatest amount of prestige, power, and (usually) wealth. In the case of English its development has been in part the result of the invention of the printing press in the sixteenth-century and the subsequent increase in printed versions of the language. This then stimulated more than a hundred years of deliberate efforts by grammarians to standardize spelling and grammatical rules. Their decisions invariably favored the dialect spoken by the aristocracy. Some of their other decisions were rather arbitrarily determined by standards more appropriate to Latin, or even mathematics. For example, as it is in many other languages, it was typical among the common people of the time (and it still is among the present-day working classes and in casual speech), to use multiple negative particles in a sentence, like "I *don't* have *no* money." Those eighteenth-century grammarians said we must use either *don't* or *no*, but not both, that is, "I don't have any money" or "I have no money." They based this on a mathematical rule that says that two negatives make a positive. (When multiplying two signed negative numbers, such as -5 times -2, the result is 10.) These grammarians claimed that if we used the double negative, we would really be saying the positive, or "I have money." Obviously, anyone who utters that double-negative sentence is not trying to say that they have money, but the rule still applies for standard English to this day.

Non-standard varieties of English, also known as vernaculars, are usually distinguished from the standard by their inclusion of such stigmatized forms as multiple negatives, the use of the verb form ain't (which was originally the normal contraction of *am not*, as in "I ain't," comparable to "you aren't," or "she isn't"); pronunciation of words like *this* and *that* as *dis* and *dat*; pronunciation of final "–ing"

as "–in;" and any other feature that grammarians have decreed as "improper" English.

The standard of any language is a rather artificial, idealized form of language, the language of education. One must learn its rules in school because it is not anyone's true first language. Everyone speaks a dialect, although some dialects are closer to the standard than others. Those that are regarded with the least prestige and respect in society are associated with the groups of people who have the least amount of social prestige. People with the highest levels of education have greater access to the standard, but even they usually revert to their first dialect as the appropriate register in the context of an informal situation with friends and family. In other words, no language variety is inherently better or worse than any other one. It is due to social attitudes that people label some varieties as "better" or "proper," and others as "incorrect" or "bad." Recall Language Universal 3: "All languages are systematic, rule driven, and equally complex overall, and equally capable of expressing any idea that the speaker wishes to convey."

In 1972 sociolinguist William Labov did an interesting study in which he looked at the pronunciation of the sound /r/ in the speech of New Yorkers in two different department stores. Many people from that area drop the /r/ sound in words like *fourth* and *floor* (*fawth*, *floah*), but this pronunciation is primarily associated with lower social classes and is not a feature of the approved standard for English, even in New York City. In two different contexts, an upscale store and a discount store, Labov asked customers what floor a certain item could be found on, already knowing it was the fourth floor. He then asked them to repeat their answer, as though he hadn't heard it correctly. He compared the first with the second answers by the same person, and he compared the answers in the expensive store versus the cheaper store. He found 1) that the responders in the two stores differed overall in their pronunciation of this sound, and 2) that the same person may differ between situations of less and more self-consciousness (first versus second answer). That is, people in

the upscale store tended to pronounce the /r/, and responders in both stores tended to produce the standard pronunciation more in their second answers in an effort to sound "higher class." These results showed that the pronunciation or deletion of /r/ in New York correlates with both social status and context.[5]

There is nothing inherently better or worse in either pronunciation; it depends entirely on the social norms of the community. The same /r/ deletion that is stigmatized in New York City is the prestigious, standard form in England, used by the upper class and announcers for the BBC. The pronunciation of the /r/ sound in England is stigmatized because it is used by lower-status people in some industrial cities.

It is important to note that almost everyone has access to a number of different language variations and registers. They know that one variety is appropriate to use with some people in some situations, and others should be used with other people or in other situations. The use of several language varieties in a particular interaction is known as code-switching.

Linguistic Relativity: The Whorf Hypothesis

In the 1920s, Benjamin Whorf was a graduate student studying with linguist Edward Sapir at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Sapir, considered the father of American linguistic anthropology, was responsible for documenting and recording the languages and cultures of many Native American tribes, which were disappearing at an alarming rate. This was due primarily to the deliberate efforts of the United States government to force Native Americans to assimilate into the Euro-American culture. Sapir and

5. [6]

6. [4]

his predecessors were well aware of the close relationship between culture and language because each culture is reflected in and influences its language. Anthropologists need to learn the language of the culture they are studying in order to understand the world view of its speakers. Whorf believed that the reverse is also true, that a language affects culture as well, by actually influencing how its speakers think. His hypothesis proposes that the words and the structures of a language influence how its speakers think about the world, how they behave, and ultimately the culture itself. (See our definition of culture above.) Simply stated, Whorf believed that human beings see the world the way they do because the specific languages they speak influence them to do so. He developed this idea through both his work with Sapir and his work as a chemical engineer for the Hartford Insurance Company investigating the causes of fires.

One of his cases while working for the insurance company was a fire at a business where there were a number of gasoline drums. Those that contained gasoline were surrounded by signs warning employees to be cautious around them and to avoid smoking near them. The workers were always careful around those drums. On the other hand, empty gasoline drums were stored in another area, but employees were more careless there. Someone tossed a cigarette or lighted match into one of the "empty" drums, it went up in flames, and started a fire that burned the business to the ground. Whorf theorized that the meaning of the word *empty* implied to the worker that "nothing" was there to be cautious about so the worker behaved accordingly. Unfortunately, an "empty" gasoline drum may still contain fumes, which are more flammable than the liquid itself.

Whorf's studies at Yale involved working with Native American languages, including Hopi. The Hopi language is quite different from English, in many ways. For example, let's look at how the Hopi language deals with time. Western languages (and cultures) view time as a flowing river in which we are being carried continuously away from a past, through the present, and into a future. Our verb systems reflect that concept with specific tenses for past, present,

and future. We think of this concept of time as universal, that all humans see it the same way. A Hopi speaker has very different ideas and the structure of their language both reflects and shapes the way they think about time. The Hopi language has no present, past, or future tense. Instead, it divides the world into what Whorf called the manifested and unmanifest domains. The manifested domain deals with the physical universe, including the present, the immediate past and future; the verb system uses the same basic structure for all of them. The unmanifest domain involves the remote past and the future, as well as the world of desires, thought, and life forces. The set of verb forms dealing with this domain are consistent for all of these areas, and are different from the manifested ones. Also, there are no words for hours, minutes, or days of the week.

Native Hopi speakers often had great difficulty adapting to life in the English speaking world when it came to being "on time" for work or other events. It is simply not how they had been conditioned to behave with respect to time in their Hopi world, which followed the phases of the moon and the movements of the sun. In a book about the Abenaki who lived in Vermont in the mid-1800s, Trudy Ann Parker described their concept of time, which very much resembled that of the Hopi and many of the other Native American tribes. "They called one full day a sleep, and a year was called a winter. Each month was referred to as a moon and always began with a new moon. An Indian day wasn't divided into minutes or hours. It had four time periods—sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight. Each season was determined by the budding or leafing of plants, the spawning of fish or the rutting time for animals. Most Indians thought the white race had been running around like scared rabbits ever since the invention of the clock."[7]

The lexicon, or vocabulary, of a language is an inventory of the items a culture talks about and has categorized in order to make

7. [8]

8. [5]

sense of the world and deal with it effectively. For example, modern life is dictated for many by the need to travel by some kind of vehicle—cars, trucks, SUVs, trains, buses, etc. We therefore have thousands of words to talk about them, including types of vehicles, models, brands, or parts.

The most important aspects of each culture are similarly reflected in the lexicon of its language. Among the societies living in the islands of Oceania in the Pacific, fish have great economic and cultural importance. This is reflected in the rich vocabulary that describes all aspects of the fish and the environments that islanders depend on for survival. For example, in Palau there are about 1,000 fish species and Palauan fishermen knew, long before biologists existed, details about the anatomy, behavior, growth patterns and habitat of most of them—in many cases far more than modern biologists know even today. Much of fish behavior is related to the tides and the phases of the moon. Throughout Oceania, the names given to certain days of the lunar months reflect the likelihood of successful fishing. For example, in the Caroline Islands, the name for the night before the new moon is *otolol*, which means "to swarm." The name indicates that the best fishing days cluster around the new moon. In Hawai`i and Tahiti two sets of days have names containing the particle *`ole* or *`ore*; one occurs in the first quarter of the moon and the other in the third quarter. The same name is given to the prevailing wind during those phases. The words mean "nothing," because those days were considered bad for fishing as well as planting.

Parts of Whorf's hypothesis, known as linguistic relativity, were controversial from the beginning, and still are among some linguists. Yet Whorf's ideas now form the basis for an entire sub-field of cultural anthropology: cognitive or psychological anthropology. A number of studies have been done that support Whorf's ideas. Linguist George Lakoff's work looks at the pervasive existence of metaphors in everyday speech that can be said to

predispose a speaker's world view and attitudes on a variety of human experiences.[9]

A metaphor is an expression in which one kind of thing is understood and experienced in terms of another entirely unrelated thing; the metaphors in a language can reveal aspects of the culture of its speakers. Take, for example, the concept of an argument. In logic and philosophy, an argument is a discussion involving differing points of view, or a debate. But the conceptual metaphor in American culture can be stated as ARGUMENT IS WAR. This metaphor is reflected in many expressions of the everyday language of American speakers: I won the argument. He shot down every point I made. They attacked every argument we made. Your point is right on target. I had a fight with my boyfriend last night. In other words, we use words appropriate for discussing war when we talk about arguments, which are certainly not real war. But we actually think of arguments as a verbal battle that often involve anger, and even violence, which then structures how we argue.

To illustrate that this concept of argument is not universal, Lakoff suggests imagining a culture where an argument is not something to be won or lost, with no strategies for attacking or defending, but rather as a dance where the dancers' goal is to perform in an artful, pleasing way. No anger or violence would occur or even be relevant to speakers of this language, because the metaphor for that culture would be ARGUMENT IS DANCE.

9. [10]

10. [6]

LANGUAGE IN ITS SOCIAL SETTINGS: LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

The way we speak can be seen as a marker of who we are and with whom we identify. We talk like the other people around us, where we live, our social class, our region of the country, our ethnicity, and even our gender. These categories are not homogeneous. All New Yorkers do not talk exactly the same; all women do not speak according to stereotypes: all African-Americans do not speak an African-American dialect. No one speaks the same way in all situations and contexts, but there are some consistencies in speaking styles that are associated with many of these categories.

Social Class

As discussed above, people can indicate social class by the way they speak. The closer to the standard version their dialect is, the more they are seen as a member of a higher social class because the dialect reflects a higher level of education. In American culture, social class is defined primarily by income and net worth, and it is difficult (but not impossible) to acquire wealth without a high level of education. However, the speech of people in the higher social classes also varies with the region of the country where they live, because there is no single standard of American English, especially with respect to pronunciation. An educated Texan will sound different from an educated Bostonian, but they will use the standard version of English from their own region. The lower the social class of a community, the more their language variety will differ from both the standard and from the vernaculars of other regions.

Ethnicity

An ethnicity, or ethnic group, is a group of people who identify with each other based on some combination of shared cultural heritage, ancestry, history, country of origin, language, or dialect. In the United States such groups are frequently referred to as "races," but there is no such thing as biological race, and this misconception has historically led to racism and discrimination. Because of the social implications and biological inaccuracy of the term "race," it is often more accurate and appropriate to use the terms ethnicity or ethnic group. A language variety is often associated with an ethnic group when its members use language as a marker of solidarity. They may also use it to distinguish themselves from a larger, sometimes oppressive, language group when they are a minority population.

A familiar example of an oppressed ethnic group with a distinctive dialect is African-Americans. They have a unique history among minorities in the United States, with their centuries-long experience as captive slaves and subsequent decades under Jim Crow laws. (These laws restricted their rights after their emancipation from slavery.) With the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and other laws, African-Americans gained legal rights to access public places and housing, but it is not possible to eliminate racism and discrimination only by passing laws; both still exist among the white majority. It is no longer "politically correct" to openly express racism, but it is much less frowned upon to express negative attitudes about African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). Typically, it is not the language itself that these attitudes are targeting; it is the people who speak it.

As with any language variety, AAVE is a complex, rule-driven, grammatically consistent language variety, a dialect of American English with a distinctive history. A widely accepted hypothesis of the origins of AAVE is as follows. When Africans were captured and brought to the Americas, they brought their own languages with

them. But some of them already spoke a version of English called a pidgin. A pidgin is a language that springs up out of a situation in which people who do not share a language must spend extended amounts of time together, usually in a working environment. Pidgins are the only exception to the Language Universal number 3 (all languages are systematic, rule driven, and equally complex overall, and equally capable of expressing any idea that the speaker wishes to convey).

There are no primitive languages, but a pidgin is a simplified language form, cobbled together based mainly on one core language, in this case English, using a small number of phonemes, simplified syntactic rules, and a minimal lexicon of words borrowed from the other languages involved. A pidgin has no native speakers; it is used primarily in the environment in which it was created. An English-based pidgin was used as a common language in many areas of West Africa by traders interacting with people of numerous language groups up and down the major rivers. Some of the captive Africans could speak this pidgin, and it spread among them after the slaves arrived in North America and were exposed daily to English speakers. Eventually, the use of the pidgin expanded to the point that it developed into the original forms of what has been called a Black English plantation creole. A creole is a language that develops from a pidgin when it becomes so widely used that children acquire it as one of their first languages. In this situation it becomes a more fully complex language consistent with Universal number 3.

All African-Americans do not speak AAVE, and people other than African-Americans also speak it. Anyone who grows up in an area where their friends speak it may be a speaker of AAVE like the rapper Eminem, a white man who grew up in an African-American neighborhood in Detroit. Present-day AAVE is not homogeneous; there are many regional and class variations. Most variations have several features in common, for instance, two phonological features: the dropped /r/ typical of some New York dialects, and the pronunciation of the "*th*" sound of words like this and that as a /d/ sound, *dis* and *dat*. Most of the features of AAVE are also

present in many other English dialects, but those dialects are not as severely stigmatized as AAVE is. It is interesting, but not surprising, that AAVE and southern dialects of white English share many features. During the centuries of slavery in the south, African-American slaves outnumbered whites on most plantations. Which group do you think had the most influence on the other group's speech? The African-American community itself is divided about the acceptability of AAVE. It is probably because of the historical oppression of African-Americans as a group that the dialect has survived to this day, in resistance to the majority white society's disapproval.

Language and Gender

In any culture that has differences in gender role expectations—and all cultures do—there are differences in how people talk based on their sex and gender identity. These differences have nothing to do with biology. Children are taught from birth how to behave appropriately as a male or a female in their culture, and different cultures have different standards of behavior. It must be noted that not all men and women in a society meet these standards, but when they do not they may pay a social price. Some societies are fairly tolerant of violations of their standards of gendered behavior, but others are less so.

In the United States, men are generally expected to speak in a low, rather monotone pitch; it is seen as masculine. If they do not sound sufficiently masculine, American men are likely to be negatively labeled as effeminate. Women, on the other hand, are freer to use their entire pitch range, which they often do when expressing emotion, especially excitement. When a woman is a television news announcer, she will modulate the pitch of her voice to a sound more typical of a man in order to be perceived as more credible. Women tend to use minimal responses in a conversation

more than men. These are the vocal indications that one is listening to a speaker, such as m-hm, yeah, I see, wow, and so forth. They tend to face their conversation partners more and use more eye contact than men. This is one reason women often complain that men do not listen to them.

Deborah Tannen, a professor of linguistics at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., has done research for many years on language and gender. Her basic finding is that in conversation women tend to use styles that are relatively cooperative, to emphasize an equal relationship, while men seem to talk in a more competitive way in order to establish their positions in a hierarchy. She emphasizes that both men and women may be cooperative and competitive in different ways.[11]

Other societies have very different standards for gendered speech styles. In Madagascar, men use a very flowery style of talk, using proverbs, metaphors and riddles to indirectly make a point and to avoid direct confrontation. The women on the other hand speak bluntly and say directly what is on their minds. Both admire men's speech and think of women's speech as inferior. When a man wants to convey a negative message to someone, he will ask his wife to do it for him. In addition, women control the marketplaces where tourists bargain for prices because it is impossible to bargain with a man who will not speak directly. It is for this reason that Malagasy women are relatively independent economically.

In Japan, women were traditionally expected to be subservient to men and speak using a "feminine" style, appropriate for their position as wife and mother, but the Japanese culture has been changing in recent decades so more and more women are joining the work force and achieving positions of relative power. Such women must find ways of speaking to maintain their feminine identities and at the same time express their authority in

11. [12]
12. [7]

interactions with men, a challenging balancing act. Women in the United States do as well, to a certain extent. Even Margaret Thatcher, prime minister of England, took speech therapy lessons to "feminize" her language use while maintaining an expression of authority.

The Deaf Culture and Signed Languages

Deaf people constitute a linguistic minority in many societies worldwide based on their common experience of life. This often results in their identification with a local Deaf culture. Such a culture may include shared beliefs, attitudes, values, norms, and values, like any other culture, and it is invariably marked by communication through the use of a sign language. It is not enough to be physically deaf (spelled with a lower case "d") to belong to a Deaf culture (written with a capital "D"). In fact, one does not even need to be deaf. Identification with a Deaf culture is a personal choice. It can include family members of deaf people or anyone else who associates with deaf people, as long as the community accepts them. Especially important, members of Deaf culture are expected to be competent communicators in the sign language of the culture. In fact, there have been profoundly deaf people who were not accepted into the local Deaf community because they could not sign. In some deaf schools, at least in the United States, the practice has been to teach deaf children how to lip read and speak orally, and to prevent them from using a signed system. They were expected to blend in with the hearing community as much as possible. This is called the oralist approach to education, but it is considered by members of the Deaf community to be a threat to the existence of their culture. For the same reason, the development of cochlear implants, which can restore hearing for some deaf children, has been controversial in U.S. Deaf communities. The members often have a positive attitude toward their deafness and

do not consider it to be a disability. To them, regaining hearing represents disloyalty to the group and a desire to leave it.

According to the World Federation of the Deaf, there are over 200 distinct sign languages in the world, which are not mutually comprehensible. They are all considered by linguists to be true languages, consistent with linguistic definitions of all human languages. They differ only in the fact that they are based on a gestural-visual rather than a vocal-auditory sensory mode. Each is a true language with basic units comparable to phonemes but composed of hand positions, shapes, and movements, plus some facial expressions. Each has its own unique set of morphemes and grammatical rules. American Sign Language (ASL), too, is a true language separate from English; it is not English on the hands. Like all other signed languages, it is possible to sign with a word-for-word translation from English, using finger spelling for some words, which is helpful in teaching the deaf to read, but they prefer their own language, ASL, for ordinary interactions. Of course, Deaf culture identity intersects with other kinds of cultural identity, like nationality, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation, so each Deaf culture is not only small but very diverse.

LANGUAGE CHANGE: HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

Recall the language universal stating that all languages change over time. In fact, it is not possible to keep them from doing so. How and why does this happen? The study of how languages change is known as historical linguistics. The processes, both historical and linguistic, that cause language change can affect all of its systems: phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, and semantic.

Historical linguists have placed most of the languages of the world into taxonomies, groups of languages classified together based on

words that have the same or similar meanings. Language taxonomies create something like a family tree of languages. For example, words in the Romance family of languages, called sister languages, show great similarities to each other because they have all derived from the same "mother" language, Latin (the language of Rome). In turn, Latin is considered a "sister" language to Sanskrit (once spoken in India and now the mother language of many of India's modern languages, and still the language of the Hindu religion) and classical Greek. Their "mother" language is called "Indo-European," which is also the mother (or grandmother!) language of almost all the rest of European languages.

Let's briefly examine the history of the English language as an example of these processes of change. England was originally populated by Celtic peoples, the ancestors of today's Irish, Scots, and Welsh. The Romans invaded the islands in the first-century AD, bringing their Latin language with them. This was the edge of their empire; their presence there was not as strong as it was on the European mainland. When the Roman Empire was defeated in about 500 AD by Germanic speaking tribes from northern Europe (the "barbarians"), a number of those related Germanic languages came to be spoken in various parts of what would become England. These included the languages of the Angles and the Saxons, whose names form the origin of the term Anglo-Saxon and of the name of England itself—Angle-land. At this point, the languages spoken in England included those Germanic languages, which gradually merged as various dialects of English, with a small influence from the Celtic languages, some Latin from the Romans, and a large influence from Viking invaders. This form of English, generally referred to as Old English, lasted for about 500 years. In 1066 AD, England was invaded by William the Conqueror from Normandy, France. New French rulers brought the French language. French is a Latin-based language, and it is by far the greatest source of the Latin-based words in English today; almost 10,000 French words were adopted into the English of the time period. This was the beginning of Middle English, which lasted another 500 years or so.

The change to Modern English had two main causes. One was the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth-century, which resulted in a deliberate effort to standardize the various dialects of English, mostly in favor of the dialect spoken by the elite. The other source of change, during the fifteenth and sixteenth-centuries, was a major shift in the pronunciation of many of the vowels. Middle English words like hus and ut came to be pronounced house and out. Many other vowel sounds also changed in a similar manner.

None of the early forms of English are easily recognizable as English to modern speakers. Here is an example of the first two lines of the Lord's Prayer in Old English, from 995 AD, before the Norman Invasion:

Fæder ūre, ðū ðē eart on heofonum,
Sī ðīn nama gehālgod.

Here are the same two lines in Middle English, English spoken from 1066 AD until about 1500 AD. These are taken from the Wycliffe Bible in 1389 AD:

Our fadir that art in heuenes,
halwid be thi name. [13]

The following late Middle English/early Modern English version from the 1526 AD Tyndale Bible, shows some of the results of grammarians' efforts to standardize spelling and vocabulary for wider distribution of the printed word due to the invention of the printing press:

O oure father which arte in heven,
halowed be thy name.

And finally, this example is from the King James Version of the Bible,

13. [14]
14. [8]

1611 AD, in the early Modern English language of Shakespeare. It is almost the same archaic form that modern Christians use.

Our father which art in heauen,
hallowed be thy name.

Over the centuries since the beginning of Modern English, it has been further affected by exposure to other languages and dialects worldwide. This exposure brought about new words and changed meanings of old words. More changes to the sound systems resulted from phonological processes that may or may not be attributable to the influence of other languages. Many other changes, especially in recent decades, have been brought about by cultural and technological changes that require new vocabulary to deal with them.

11. Digital Anthropology

DIGITAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Dr. Amy Mack
Alyssa White
Digital Anthropology Students (2023)[1]

PROLOGUE

This chapter of the OER emerged out of, and reflects the lessons learned, in a pilot version of Digital Anthropology 2XXX we delivered in Spring 2023. The course was co-designed by Amy Mack and Alyssa White, with Amy providing the disciplinary expertise around digital anthropology and relying heavily on Alyssa's expert knowledge on research creation, co-creation with students, and scaffolding assignments. We would also like to acknowledge that

1. Full list of Contributors: Franchesca A, Tristen B., Sydney B., Hans C., Amy C., August D., Annie E., JodiAnn F., Alexis G., Cole H., Kale H., Lexie H., Jelayna H., Abby J., Dominik K., Andrew L., Tristan L., Cody L., Gesiah L.G., Teryn L., Devinidi M., Preston M., Sylvia M., Megan M., Haylee M., Sarah M., Rheanna M., Alexander O., Alex P., Daelyn P., Megan P., Reed R., Jessica S., Madison S., Melia S.L., Numa S., Jessica T., Brooke T., Aidan V.D., Xena V., Taylor W. and Keily W.

this chapter would not be possible without contributions from the students in the form of case studies and fieldnotes.

The course was designed to be a crash course to the nearly 50 year history of the subdiscipline, beginning in the early 1980s. We charted a course that began alongside popular culture renderings of both utopian and dystopian digital futures, such as the box office hit featuring Harrison Ford, *Blade Runner* (1982), and William Gibson's award winning novel *Neuromancer* (1984), which gives us the term "cyber". We then moved into the 1990s, which were increasingly characterized by the emergence of the internet, message boards, and email. It was also a time when anthropologists began to reflect on the possibilities of an anthropology that attended to this new technological innovation (see Escobar, 1994; Downey, Dumit, and Williams, 1995).

The 2000s then became a time when anthropologists began to pull the threads of the '80s and '90s together into a coherent pattern for the discipline. Beginning in the early 2000s with Christine Hine's now canonical *Virtual Anthropology* (2000), as well as Daniel Miller and Don Slater's *The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach* (2000), there was a real attempt by anthropologists to formalize the study of the digital world through an anthropological lens. This era in anthropology was also shaped by the rise and cultural domination of the massively multiplayer online roleplaying game (MMORPG), including titles like World of Warcraft, Guild Wars, Runescape, and Everquest. These games produced virtual spaces ripe for anthropological exploration. Complete with language, religion, ritual, and violence, alongside an embodied experience through a character avatar, these spaces were quickly developing as cultural communities that reflected many of our offline understanding of community. Anthropologists also realized that our analogue version of ethnography could easily map onto these spaces like never before (see Nardi, 2010; Boellstorff 2015; Boellstorff et al 2012; Taylor, 2015).

Following this boom in anthropological interest in MMORPGs and the possibilities of a digital ethnography came the rise of social media in the 2010s as well as a number of social media oriented

movements including Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring. While ethnography once again looked different on social media than offline, and indeed different than in MMORPG spaces, anthropologists took up these new field sites with deep interest.

These trends have continued on into the 2020s as anthropologists were forced to reckon with the global COVID-19 pandemic, which saw many trips to the field delayed by months if not years. The increasing neoliberalization of the university system also saw a decrease in funding for students and faculty alike, forcing anthropologists to reconsider their fieldwork for logistical and financial reasons. It was this history and current cultural context that shaped not only the course content, but the aims of the course as well.

The Digital Anthropology course was structured around the use of team-based learning. In team-based learning, students are assigned to small groups for the duration of the semester, with the goal of incorporating more application-based assessments into the course. Students work within these groups on a series of smaller assignments throughout the semester, encouraging the development of communication, collaboration, and self-efficacy skills for students (Michaelsen and Sweet, 2008). The team-based learning approach was selected for this course because of witnessed improvements by both Amy and Alyssa in student engagement with course content from past courses, and to support Alyssa's research interests in collaborative educational practices. Because of the team-based learning approach, we split the courses into two parts. On Tuesdays, Amy delivered lectures on a variety of topics ranging from methods and ethics, to moral panics and anthropological responses, to playing with gender online. On Thursdays, the students worked in their assigned groups to complete short multiple choice quizzes or scaffolding assignments that built towards our ultimate goal of case studies.

Designed to build capacity in the students around research, writing, and communicating their findings through multimodal outlets, as well as working effectively in groups, the course focused

on the co-creation of these case studies. Outside of class time, the assigned reading was deliberately light. The main text for the course was Bonnie Nardi's *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft* (2010). Amy made this decision in order to accommodate a much larger ask, namely that students complete one hour of digital fieldwork each week and take detailed notes on their experience. These fieldnotes, as well as the collaborative work they did every Thursday, was compiled into an ethnographic case study at the end of the term.

The case studies were meant to give students a taste of what it was like to be a digital anthropologist. While the students did not have the time or scope within the semester to complete fieldwork with the same depth the discipline requires, they were still responsible within their groups for the conception of a case study based on their weekly fieldnotes. Every week they logged on to their field sites, took detailed notes including screenshots, and made connections to course content. These fieldnotes were then used to select a theme for their case study.





Figures 1 and 2: *Examples of group fieldnotes, from* ***Group 1*** *(Preston M., Jelayna H., Devinidi M., Megan M., and JodiAnn F.) and* ***Group 4*** *(Haylee M., Franchesca A., Rheanna M., Andrew L., and Alex P.) respectively.*

The class consisted of 42 students from a variety of disciplines. Much to the surprise of both Amy and Alyssa, the vast majority of students were not anthropologists. Instead, we were joined by a strong contingent of New Media majors, as well as students from the humanities and sciences. In our conversations with students, it was the term "digital" that drew these students to our class. From avid video game consumers to future producers, the students were keen to understand the communities they belonged to in a different light. Indeed, many found their time in the class revealed the complexities, nuances, and tensions in ways they had not previously considered.

> "Of all my classes this semester this is going to be one

of the ones I talk about throughout my degree. As we all know I am a New Media major and I didn't think I would take so much away from this class that I can use in my degree and future profession. My whole thought process of digital media is now different. I know about the tech and process of making games but something I never thought of was how things that I might make in the future will affect so many people in different ways. The sexism and racism in games is pretty apparent to genre sadly however I had not really thought about the communities [sic] that are on the internet that even I am a part of" (Student end of semester reflection).

INTRODUCTION

Despite the long history of digital anthropology outlined in the prologue, the overall discipline of anthropology has been slower to adopt digital spaces as possible field sites than our sister disciplines of sociology and cultural studies (see also Coleman, 2010). Much of this slowness can be traced back to several enduring tropes about anthropology and ethnography, including those of "going away," "being there," and studying the "ethnographic other."

In the late 1990s, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997) advanced the notion of the hierarchy of purity, which was meant to critically engage with anthropology's tropes of going away to study an ethnographic 'Other'. They argued that anthropology had a history

of prioritizing distance in ethnographic work[2]. Given that the "standard" anthropologist was still conceptualized as a white Euro-American man, that meant that the "purest" research would be conducted outside of white Europe and America, on a population that did not speak English, were not Christian, and did not practice the same economic or political systems as the anthropologist. Yet, in contrast, digital anthropology increasingly turned the ethnographic gaze on an "Other" who looked an awful lot like "us" anthropologists. Often, though not exclusively, the interlocutors of digital anthropologists are white, English speaking, Euro-American men. This discrepancy was, and continues to be for some, irreconcilable. As Amy was once told early in her career, "leave that work for the sociologists."

The second quibble that some in the anthropological community found with the emerging field was rooted in the trope of "being there." As Carole McGranahan (2018) notes in her reflections on the importance of ethnographic sensibility, there is an enduring gold standard of "being there," and this is tied up with notions of embodied experiences. Anthropology, after all, has proudly recounted the rich, multi-sensorial experiences of the field. Readers wanted to know what the smells, the flavors, and the textures of the field were, and anthropologists were equally keen to tell them. We were collectively schooled by Clifford Geertz in the 1980s to deliver thick description after all. In comparison, it is easy to assume that the disembodied world of the internet feels flat or thin. Or, perhaps more pointedly, does not feel at all.

Despite the assumption of a flat or thin or unfeeling space, digital anthropology has a long history of arguing the opposite. Christin Hine (2000) repeatedly noted how the community building practices online reflected those offline. The MMORPG scholars, like

2. By distance, we mean cultural, linguistic, political, religious, and economic.

Nardi, Boellstorff, and Taylor, also demonstrated how the avatar provided an embodied proxy that let the anthropologist sense their way through virtual worlds filled with culture, language, and ritual. In many ways, these early digital anthropologists doubled down on the tropes of the discipline to prove that their work was, indeed, anthropological. In her reflections on the difference between her "traditional" or analogue ethnographic work in Papua New Guinea and Western Samoa and her digital ethnographic work on World of Warcraft, Nardi (2010) notes,

> I learned to play the game well enough to participate in a raiding guild. I looked just like any other player. For many practical purposes, I was just another player. I could not have studied raiding guilds without playing as well as at least an average player and fully participating in raids. By contrast, when I was walking around villages in Papua New Guinea or Western Samoa, I was obviously an outsider whose identity required explanation (p. 34).

Similarly, scholars like Boellstorff et al. (2012) emphasized the possibilities of digital ethnography to include participant observation, which they saw as the hallmark of ethnography in any form.

> ...one method above all others is fundamental to ethnographic research. This method is participant observation, the cornerstone of ethnography. Participant observation is the embodied emplacement of the researching self in a field site as a consequential social actor. We participate in everyday life and become well-known to our informants (p. 65).

Further, they articulated the spaces they worked in as ethnographic sites due to their worldness qualities,

> They are not just spatial representations but offer an object-rich environment that participants can traverse and with

> which they can interact. Second, virtual worlds are multi-user in nature; they exist as shared social environments with synchronous communication and interactions. While participants may engage in solitary activities within them, virtual worlds thrive through co-inhabitation with others. Third, they are persistent: they continue to exist in some form even as participants log off. They can thus change while any one participant is absent, based on the platform itself or the activities of other participants. Fourth, virtual worlds allow participants to embody themselves, usually as avatars (even if 'textual avatars,' as in text-only virtual worlds such as MUDs), such that they can explore and participate in the virtual world (p. 7).

As digital anthropologists, we are much indebted to this work done by our predecessors. Yet it was not just Gupta and Ferguson's critique of the tropes, or Boellstorff and Nardi's strategic use of the same old tropes to validate their work, that propelled the world of digital anthropology forward. Rather, it was the changing cultural landscape of the offline world that forced anthropology to reconsider the digital once again.

Increasingly for most anthropologists, our interlocutors are online. To ignore this fact, is to ignore a substantial part of our interlocutors' lives (Postill and Pink, 2012). In a parallel sense, as researchers, we are more likely to use digital methods, such as Zoom or Skype for interviews when travel is inconvenient or impossible. Like our interlocutors, we may also spend time in the community Facebook groups to stay apprised of local happenings. Additionally, as a discipline, many of us have moved our professional lives online as we network over Twitter and LinkedIn.

Beyond shifts in how we and our interlocutors are increasingly cyborgian – to borrow from both William Gibson and Donna Harraway – each era of digital anthropology we pointed to in the introduction were marked by moral panics. From dystopian futures in the 1980s to violent video games in the 2010s to contemporary

conversations around screen time for children, it is clear that broader society is concerned about the impact technology has on us as humans. As a result, many anthropologists have felt compelled to take up digital anthropology to contribute our disciplinary perspectives to societal questions. For example, media anthropologist Christopher Bareither explores and contrasts the impact and embodied experience of violence in video games and film. This interest in violence is echoed by Robertson Allen, who interrogates the interplay between video games, violence, and the American military-industrial complex through his work on the US Army-funded game and recruitment tool America's Army. Gabriella Coleman's work on the online hacker group, Anonymous, explores how technology can be used in subversive ways. Similarly, Zizi Papacharissi's work on the Occupy Wall Street and Arab Spring draws anthropological attention to affective publics and counter publics produced and maintained through social media. And this pursuit of how our humanness is shaped by technology, we argue, is a very anthropological line of inquiry (Turkle, 1997; 2005).

METHODOLOGY

Traversing into this new domain was mildly intimidating and a bit rocky at first, as it was many of our first encounters with this community. Figuring out how to research the material we were viewing was a daunting task at first, but through a variety of methods we were able to get very comfortable and were able to efficiently navigate our way through this new field site.

The following sections will discuss our methods of collecting ethnographic data.

Accessing an online fieldsite is a lot easier than accessing a traditional fieldsite in the past. Postill & Pink (2012) addressed this in their response to the "primacy of MMORPG's", pushing back against the premise of a "bounded site" being necessary, and instead moving toward a more "messy" field site – one with varying intensities and clusters. Interestingly, all of us accessed Twitch from our respective homes after we were done at the University. This is an example of this "messy" field site – we all access the site from different locations at different times. A typical Twitch observation would be somewhere between 3pm-10pm and last anywhere from 30-60 minutes. We would take notes, both physically on paper or digitally on our laptops. Screenshots were a priority – catching important fleeting moments on the Twitch stream so we could include them in our ethnographic reports. Something unique to Twitch is their use of emotes in the chat; some of which are not available without a web plugin. One of our group members downloaded a web plugin to view all of the emotes, which was useful information that contributed to our report that not everyone had access to see. Another feature unique to Twitch was VOD's (Video on Demand) and Twitch clips, which were clips already recorded in another streaming session. This was a particularly useful tool that we would use to learn more about the streamer's regular streaming behavior, and

learn about how the chat interacts with the streamer on a regular basis.

Having multi-sited fieldwork was something that we learned to utilize as we progressed in how effective at researching we were. In the initial weeks, our research largely consisted of just watching Twitch streams and collecting information just from that data. However, as we came to learn more about digital ethnography, we learned how multi-sited this research can be [useful? Feels like you didn't finish this sentence]. As we learned in class, Miller & Slater (2000) wrote The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach and wrote about the multi-sited nature of the internet. As weeks went on and we progressed with our newfound ethnographic research skills, multi-sited fieldwork became a part of our weekly ethnographic routine. Checking out a streamer's other social media accounts became a regular part of our observations. Commonly looking at Instagram, Twitter, and Reddit every week gave us much more insight into not only the individual streamer, but the field and community as a whole.

– Group 2 (Taylor W., Keily W., Cole H., Hans C., Sydney B.)

As a subdiscipline, digital anthropology is still about ethnographic inquiry. This means that while approaches may differ and the fluidity of field sites may look different from traditional anthropology at the surface level, much of the methodology remains the same at its core. Distinctions in methodology are often the result of translating traditional understandings of ethnographic fieldwork into virtual spaces.

The research question is critical to digital anthropology research. Like all ethnographic work, the research question often examines a cultural idea, value, or norm within a specific group or space. This question does not always need to be fully formed for research to begin – in fact, like with most ethnographic research, it is often the opposite. In her 2010 ethnography, *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft*, Bonnie Nardi reflects on her own lack of research question upon entering the field, noting that "when I began my study, I had no hypotheses or precise research questions…ethnography moves in a "go with the flow" pattern that attempts to follow the interesting and the unexpected as they are encountered in the field" (p. 27). Ethnographic research is, more often than not, a part of a broader conversation of established literature, whether it is a response, a criticism, an expansion, or a filling of a gap. Anthropologists often find their research question developing as they spend more time in their chosen field site and with their interlocutors.

Digital Field Sites

Digital field sites, at first glance, may appear quite different from traditional notions of what constitutes a field site in anthropology. While travel often occurs, it is not a necessity; many digital anthropologists conduct their work from their home locations. The ability to access your field site at will from the comfort of your own home is a bit of a double-edged sword; it eliminates the difficulties of travel that many anthropologists face, including navigating global travel, arranging for housing, and dealing with the challenges of navigating a new cultural setting while separated from your personal support network. However, it also further exaggerates the work-life balance that many anthropologists already struggle with, as your at-home responsibilities often wait just outside of your office door after a long day in the field. In fact, the distinction between being in the field, and being at home often blurs until it is

almost impossible to distinguish when you have 24/7 access to your field site through your own personal cell phone.

How do digital anthropologists even define the boundaries of their own field sites? Understanding where your field site "ends" in a digital space is often more complex than a traditional physical field site that is marked by its geographical boundaries. While many digital anthropologists narrow their focus to what appears to resemble a traditional field site – Nardi's research on World of Warcraft, for example – their research is often not limited to that specific medium. Just like researchers, interlocutors have the ability to traverse the expanse of online spaces, and many engage with their interests on multiple mediums. The opportunity to do so has only increased as access to social media platforms increases as well. Players often do not just limit their time to the game itself – they spend time on game-specific forums, stream their gameplay on Twitch, create video essays for Youtube, engage with others in discussions on Reddit, and share game images or clips on Twitter. They engage with their interests in offline spaces, such as at conventions, through the creation of physical artifacts such as cosplay, or by arranging in-person gaming sessions. Digital anthropologists are faced with a staggering amount of opportunity for data collection in a variety of mediums from multiple platforms. Postill and Pink (2012) push back against the need for a neatly-bounded, pre-established field site that an ethnographer must discover and enter, arguing that it is the ethnographer themselves that create their own field site as they navigate through all of the possibilities – stumbling across hyperlinks, following interlocutors' guidance, and browsing threads to determine their relevance. Postill and Pink determine the internet as "a messy fieldwork environment that crosses online and offline worlds, and is connected and constituted through the ethnographer's narrative" (2012, p. 126).

Multi-sited ethnography – ethnography conducted at multiple, connected sites of research – is therefore critical to digital anthropology as the ethnographer shapes their field site through their own navigation. While this often involves a variety of digital

spaces, offline spaces are just as critical. Data collection can occur in both types of spaces, and digital anthropologists argue that understanding the offline contexts of our interlocutors is just as important as examining the digital, even if we never step foot in these physical spaces. Boellstorff et al. (2012) argue that "virtual and physical world sociality often intertwine in meaningful ways" (p. 63). It is vital that anthropologists understand their interlocutors' offline contexts because our offline social and cultural practices are often replicated in our digital spaces (Postill and Pink 2012). In his 2008 ethnography, *Coming of Age in Second Life*, Tom Boellstorff emphasized that attempting to distinguish between virtual and 'real' (offline) spaces was a reflection of a poor understanding of digital spaces. These virtual worlds, Boellstorff argued, were just as 'real' as our offline spaces, filled with meaningful interactions between individuals through the use of digital avatars that were often entangled with the user's physical self and identity. In the age of social media, this is increasingly true, as individuals utilize these platforms to display their offline lives. Ross' (2019) discovery that individuals chose to present themselves differently on their public Instagram accounts versus their more authentic portrayal of themselves on their "finstagrams" is an example of this.

Like traditional ethnography, digital anthropology is rooted in long-term participant-observation. However, participant-observation in digital spaces often becomes more of a spectrum than its offline counterpart. Entering a digital space often comes with the precedent that you will be observed in some capacity, particularly with public accounts. Your engagement with Reddit threads can be seen by others; your Tweets may be suggested to those who do not directly follow you, but interact with similar content. Your Tiktoks will be pushed to other individuals through the use of algorithms. Even with privacy features enabled, you can more often than not, at least view a username and a profile picture, even if you can't view the content connected to the profile. This creates a wider opportunity for observation compared to physical spaces, where your access to these spaces are limited by operating

hours, payment, or visible aspects of the researcher's identity. A researcher may even be socially sanctioned for lingering and observing without direct interaction for long periods of time, and may even face removal from their location depending on what is considered culturally appropriate.

DIGITAL ANTHROPOLOGY 2XXX FIELD SITES: TO TWITCH AND BEYOND

At the outset of our course, we decided to assign a weekly one hour fieldwork session to each student. In an attempt to limit the scope of field sites students could work in –after all the internet is a vast place– we asked students to begin their work on the streaming platform, Twitch. Students were allowed to work in other spaces as a sort of supplement to their main field site, which we will turn to below.

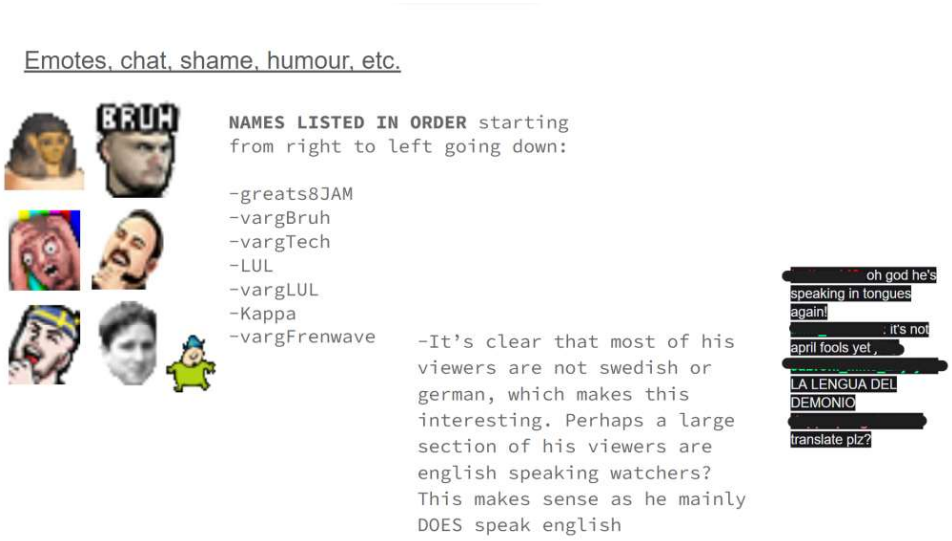


Figure 3. *An example of the emotes common in Twitch chat from Group 9's (Jessica T., Daelyn P., Tristan L., Cody L., and Alexis G.) fieldnotes.*

What is Twitch? This was a question we received from many

students who had not used the platform before the first Thursday of the semester. In short, Twitch is a streaming platform that allows individual content creators to live stream from their computers. Often, although not always, there is an audience in attendance. Originally dominated by "streamers" sharing their video game content, the platform has expanded to include live musical performances, makeup tutorials, and social hours. In this way, Twitch not only mirrors live sporting events, (see the work of T.L. Taylor [2015] on e-sports), but the local music venue, beauty school, or community pub. Importantly, in addition to the video stream from the content creator, there is typically a live chat function where audience members can converse with one another and attempt to connect with the streamer. While some streamers are extremely active in their interactions with the chat, others ignore the space entirely. Below are two different descriptions of the Twitch field site from student case studies.

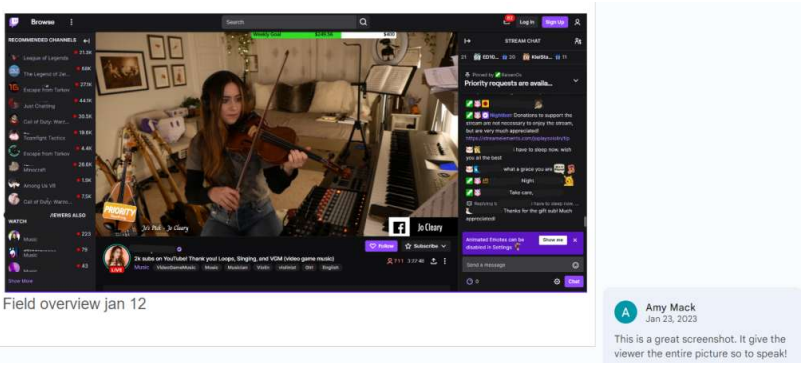


Figure 4. *Screenshot of Group 8's fieldsite to demonstrate a live music performance. This screenshot was embedded in their weekly fieldnotes. Note also the comment left by Amy on the fieldnotes. Both Amy and Alyssa spent time each week providing feedback on fieldnotes to encourage students to make connections between fieldwork and course content.*

Our main field site was Twitch, a video streaming platform that offers a way to socialize with others while watching streamers play video games, as well as other activities. Beyond Twitch, we explored other field sites like, Youtube, Twitter, Instagram and Google.

For our fieldwork, as a group we were tasked to watch a specific streamer and later we had the option to either choose our own streamer or continue to watch the same one individually; giving us the ability to compare the different communities within the platform. Thus as a group we agreed on watching a female musician, performer and songwriter.

After setting apart a specific time to watch a streamer of our choice, we sat in front of our devices with our eyes watching the screen that separated us from the action but also connected us with people all over the world. The field itself was as vivid and lively as an actual irl (In real life) busy street: Visuals flash and change on the stream, the chat buzzed with activity as the viewers ask questions, make comments, and show their support, the streamer engaged with their audience, responding to comments and questions in real-time, whilst sharing their own insights and observations on the various topics that come up in conversation. These interactions shape the overall experience of watching the stream.

Being online meant that the type and quality of data that we could collect was not limited to notes, interviews or photos. Gifs, videos, memes, sounds and even entire internet pages were all things that we could add to our collection of data, google was our oyster and we made good use of it. Of course we did not document

everything that happened from start to finish. We could argue that doing so could help with our understanding of the streamer's community, however, we also knew that documenting everything was as much of a foolish goal as it was unrealistic. We can only pay attention to so much and the amount of data that we would get as a result would be too much of a hustle to sort through.

> "*I had heard about twitch before but never used it before this class. Even when taking notes as a group I felt the platform was really overwhelming, the chat had new messages every other second, and even though there wasn't much happening on the stream itself, just the streamer looking at the camera and making small talk was enough to make me unsure on where to focus my attention…*"
>
> -Short insert from Gesiah's individual field notes
>
> –**Group 8** (Madison S., Sarah M., Abby J., Gesiah L.G.)

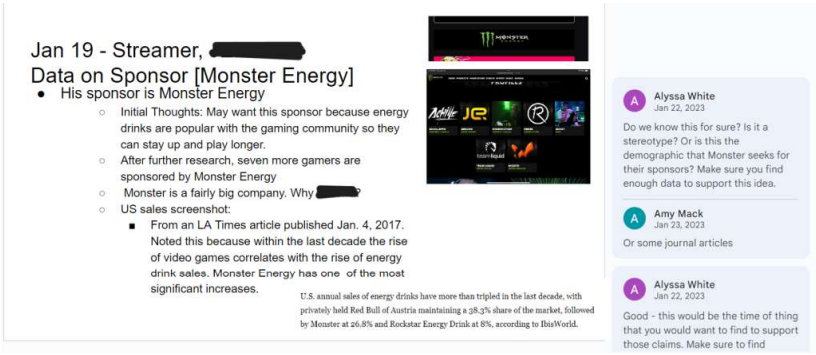


Figure 5. *Screenshot of Group 7's field notes point of the intersection of gaming and commerce as well as the groups use of research skills outside of Twitch to help provide context for their findings.*

The main field site that we visited for our fieldwork was Twitch.tv. Twitch is a large interactive streaming platform where people can stream themselves playing video games, chatting, or doing other activities. The streams are watched by other visitors to Twitch, the viewers. Along with watching the stream, viewers can use a chat feature to message the streamer and other viewers, and subscribe to the streamer to receive exclusive benefits. Many communities have been created around streamers and the activities that they do. There are many options of streams to choose from, such as video games, which is what we decided to focus on. Another option, IRL (in real life) content involves streamers streaming what they are doing offline (i.e. fishing, traveling).

Our methods included watching the chat and copying messages that were of interest to us, visiting Twitch at

least once a week, recording what streams were available for us to watch, and tallying how long viewers had been subscribed to the streamer. Our fieldwork varied day by day. Some days we watched the stream, others we examined the chat or visited related websites, or played Minecraft. We found that de Seta's (2020) second lie of Digital Anthropology, the eager participant lurker[3], was true. The same things never happened twice in a stream. Different communities would operate in different ways although existing on the same platform playing the same game. Our note taking was multimodal. All of us took images of the stream, streamer, chats, and linked websites that we observed.

Participant observation was another integral part of our fieldwork. All of us spent time lurking by observing the stream, streamer, and the chat. Lurking is the action of observing the activity that is taking place, such as the streamer and chat. Lurking allowed us to observe what was happening and pick up on certain things that may be customary or natural for a community. Identifying

3. In his 2020 article "Three lies of digital ethnography", Gabriel de Seta outlines lie #2, the "eager participant lurker" (p. 84) to discuss how participation in the field often looks different than initially expected. de Seta goes on to further elaborate that participation in the field is not always joyful, easy, or engaging – even if that's all we discuss in our published works.

these habits and customs allowed us to have a better understanding of the game and streamers community. One of our group members had Minecraft downloaded and was able to use that to his advantage when gathering data for his fieldnotes. This was important because it provided him with a greater understanding of things such as when play becomes work as well as a sort of insiders understanding of the game. Much like work done by Nardi (2010), actually taking time to play the game allowed our team member to put themselves into the shoes of people who play Minecraft. Here is a small vignette of one of our group members, Aidan, playing Minecraft:

> *Upon loading into my Minecraft world instantly I was reminded of the fond memories I have playing this game as a child. The first thing I did, almost instinctively, when spawning was chop down a couple of trees in order to gather some wood. Wood is an extremely valuable resource in this game due to the fact that almost everything is made of it. The second thing I did, and what I spent most of my time doing, was build some tools and then mine for resources such as coal, iron, and some gold or diamonds if I was lucky. After about an hour or two of mining I was reminded of when play becomes work. The task of mining for valuable ores or even just gathering cobblestone can be tiring. However, it all began to feel worth it because there was a meaningful end: diamonds.*

Much of our data collection was multimodal. Images,

screenshots, chat logs, and emotes were captured and cataloged from the stream. The many avenues of data collection and note taking allowed for the identification of a couple existing trends across the streamers that we had observed.

–**Group 7** (Brooke T., Aidan V.D., Lexie H., August D.)

THEMES AND FRAMEWORKS IN DIGITAL ANTHROPOLOGY

In this section we briefly summarize the higher level themes that digital anthropology has taken up over the decades, and provide a list of useful frameworks or concepts that help anthropologists make sense of digital spaces and experiences. Many of these themes, frameworks, and concepts will already be familiar to anthropologists as they reflect the migration of anthropological theory online. These subsections will also include work done by students in Digital Anthropology 2xxx to demonstrate the themes and concepts in practice.

Gender

Gender has been long-explored by anthropologists since the early days of the discipline. Given the history of misogyny, sexism, gendered division of games (i.e. "cozy" or life-simulation games as inherently feminine, while first-person shooter or action games are inherently male), and the countermovement of the rise of feminism in video games, it was unsurprising to us that gender was a common

theme that appeared in many of the groups' fieldwork. Group 6 in particular, who conducted their fieldwork on Call of Duty streamers, had significant encounters with misogyny during their research. This was particularly impactful to them as an all-female group.

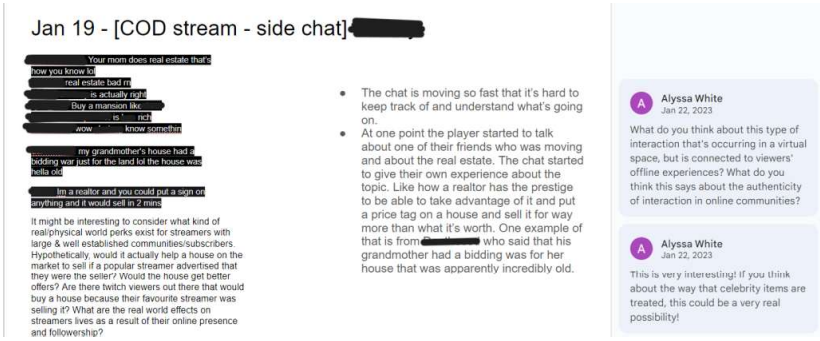


Figure 6. *Screenshot of Group 6's fieldnotes demonstrates how offline lives and experiences often make their way into virtual spaces, and how these moments are often temporary and fleeting as the chat moves on quickly to other topics.*

As a group, we chose to focus on Call of Duty, a first-person shooter game set during World War II, which allows players to explore the video game in a variety of ways, either independently or collaboratively depending on whether they decide to operate in solo or multiplayer mode. Single-player campaigns follow a more deeply engaging storyline, while multiplayer campaigns operate as online spaces where friends or randoms cooperatively complete different campaign levels. While we learned about some basic game mechanics throughout our time in the field, our focus as a group was less on the actual content of the game play, and more significantly directed at the behaviors immediately surrounding it.

Throughout our time in the field, the COD community revealed itself to be stereotypically masculine and male-dominated in nature, and brought to light a broad scope of recurring themes of interest. Most important to us, as an entirely female group, was the investigation into the prevalence of misogyny, not only within female players streams and directed at female gamers, but the frequent invocation of misogynistic language and humor that we observed on several male players streams. The major themes that emerged from our group exploration of Call of Duty commonly surrounded issues of misogyny and sexism, made evident through an overwhelming prevalence of hegemonic and toxic masculinity (mainly communicated through the side chat of viewers), the sexualization of female streamers, and the exclusion and devaluation of female gameplay.

The streaming community surrounding Call of Duty can be constituted as what Nardi (2010) coined a "boy's treehouse," "where women are allowed in but must play by the rules" (p. 152). A quick scan of the comment section under a "girl gamer" compilation video posted on youtube demonstrates the way that this 'boys treehouse' forms in real time. A video posted on youtube by a channel called "Daily Dose of COD Warzone" featured a compilation of video clips taken from several highly rated "girl-gamer's" COD Twitch streams. Compilation videos are quite a thing in the digital gaming world, however, the less-than-positive reception of an all female-streamer compilation by the youtube COD community was obvious when scrolling through the comment section:

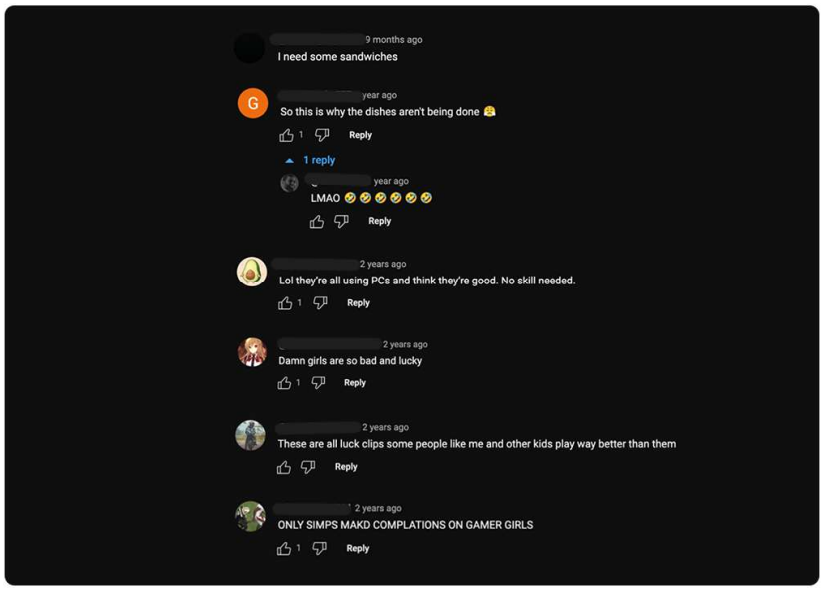


Figure 7. *Examples of misogynistic comments from Group 6's fieldwork.*

These comments demonstrate what we might call a boy's treehouse, although we would argue that Nardi's (2010) definition could be nuanced. Girls are allowed into the space, but are subject to be ridiculed, and their gameplay will likely be disregarded as 'luck' or 'cheating' as the commenters above are quick to accuse. More striking however, is the repeated generalization of the various women featured in this video as a distinct "them," which, as we know, implies the inherent "us." Those commenters (although we cannot presume to know anything about their meat sack identity), likely felt deeply connected to the COD community, and possessed a kind of "aggrieved entitlement," or a feeling

that they have somehow been threatened or disenfranchised when confronted with high level female gameplay in a gaming space which they have come to recognize as largely male dominated.

The comments shown above are the ones really worth cringing at. There were several comments of this nature, making the same tired sexist jokes as a way to indirectly (but still pretty directly) suggest that women do not belong in the digital space, and in choosing to show up in these spaces, are neglecting their other 'traditionally feminine' roles, such as doing the dishes and making sandwiches. We were often surprised by the blatancy of the comments we observed, and especially by the volume of comments which stated that the only reason for the channel to showcase skilled female gameplay was because they were 'simps,' (simp is a slang term meant to troll young men perceived to be too submissive to women in order to achieve some sort of sexual gratification they feel they deserve. The word is in fact an acronym, "Suckers Idolizing Mediocre Pussy." The word showed up numerous times throughout the comment section, which is problematic because although men are the ones calling each other simps, women are the ones inherently sexualized. Their contribution to the gaming space and COD community and in this context, any attention paid to their gameplay and skill is reduced to the service of male gamers with 'aggrieved entitlement,' who have trouble recognizing the validity of female players within the space as anything beyond their sexuality and femininity. The actions of women in COD gaming space are, therefore,

> "constrained by this [male] gaze, which itself is uniquely shaped and enabled by networked technologies" (Massanari, 2018).
>
> –**Group 6** (Sylvia M., Teryn L, Tristen B., Jessica S.)

Race

There is an old joke that "online no one knows you are a dog." For users of the internet, this is technically true when it comes to race, gender, sexuality, and other identity markers that are often visible offline. As such, the early years of the internet promised to be a progressive utopia free of the oppressive structures offline, such as racism, misogyny, homophobia, and religious intolerance. However, the internet was quickly taken up by antagonistic actors (see Bjork-James, 2020; Back, 2000). Even in space not explicitly dedicated to racism and misogyny, race and racism came to be reified in online spaces. As Monson (2012) notes in her discussion of World of Warcraft – the digital community at the center of our course text – the

> "…failure of online communities to deliver on their philosophical promise to create a race-free or racially liberating environment. Instead, Internet developers and users alike perpetuate the racial status quo… participants in online communities are invited to try on racialized identities, in particular non-White identities. Because this "identity tourism" takes place within an environment where complex real-world identities are reduced to stereotypical performances, racial role-play is more stifling than liberating or enlightening" (Monson 2012, p. 66)

Here, Monson points to the ease at which racial stereotypes are upload and reinscribed online as something for gamers to play with at their leisure. This practice of playing with race was noted in the student fieldnotes as the predominantly white male streamers they studied took on racialized avatars in games like Grand Theft Auto. These players then roleplayed, or acted out, characters in racially stereotyped ways. In the mind map below, which the group used to map out their case study, there was a concern with how much of the streamers views or biases around people of colour were leaking into the portrayal of their character. While the students were correct to draw on Miller and Slater's (2000) notion of expansive realization – the idea that online you can become something beyond the limitations of your physical body (e.g., change your physical features or capabilities) – they noted that they had experienced discomfort with this process when the avatar was used as a vehicle for playing with problematic behaviour rooted in sexism and racism.

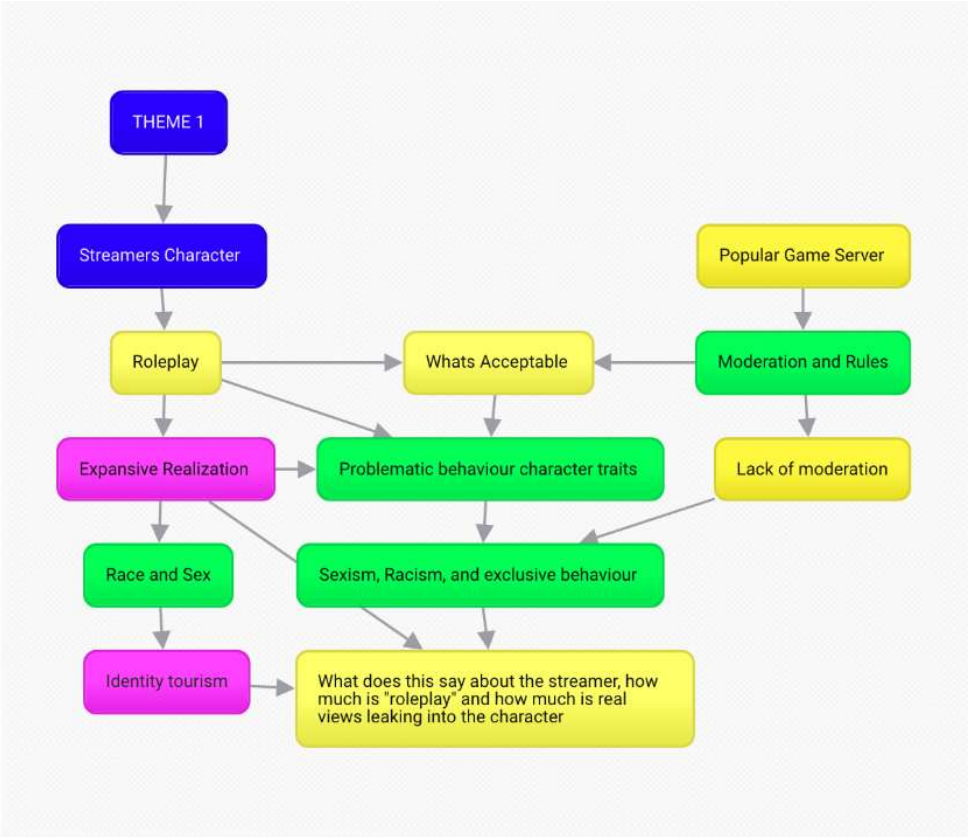


Figure 8. *Screenshot from Group 2's group field notes document. It demonstrated how they linked together ideas from class content (e.g., "expansive realization" from Miller and Slater [2000] or "identity tourism" from [Monson, 2012]) with their digital ethnographic findings.*

This is not to say that everything to do with the internet or digital media is inherently negative when it comes to race. Rather, profoundly meaningful spaces and movements have emerged around racial justice issues. Black Twitter and Indigenous TikTok are two examples that have risen to prominence in recent years alongside social movements including #BLM and #OscarsSoWhite, #StandingRock and #IdleNoMore. Even in the early days of digital ethnography, anthropologists noted the importance of digital spaces for members of diasporic communities to knit together kinship networks that now span the globe (Miller and Slater, 2000).

For more information on how digital anthropologists/ethnographers have examined race, please see:

Beyer, J.A. (2019) Playing with Consent: An Autoethnographic Analysis of Representations of Race, Rape and Colonialism in Bioware's Dragon Age. https://doi.org/10.7939/r3-8e80-tt80

Bjork-James, S. (2020). Racializing Misogyny: Sexuality and gender in the new online white nationalism. *Feminist Anthropology*, 1(2), 176-182. https://doi.org/10.1002/fea2.12011

Bonilla, Y. & Rosa, J. (2015). #Fergiuson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States. *American Ethnologists*, 42(1), 4-17. https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12112

Gray, K.L. & Stein, K. (2021). "We 'said her name' and got zucked": Black Women Calling-out the Carceral Logics of Digital Platforms. *Gender and Society*, 35(4), 538-545. https://doi.org/10.1177/08912432211029393

Monson, M.J. (2012). Race-Based Fantasy Realm: Essentialism in the *World of Warcraft*. *Games and Culture*, 7(1), 48-71. DOI: 10.1177/155541201244308

Onuoha, A. (9 August 2021). Digital Misogynoir and White Supremacy: What Black Feminist Theory Can Teach Us About Far Right Extremism. *Global Network on Extremism & Technology*. Retrieved from: https://gnet-research.org/2021/08/09/digital-misogynoir-and-white-supremacy-what-black-feminist-theory-can-teach-us-about-far-right-extremism/

Methods and Ethics

While many of the methods remain similar to offline anthropology, much of the conversation around digital anthropology involves how traditional methodology translates into online spaces. Similarly, because of the distinction between offline and online spaces, many conversations also revolve around the ethics of conducting fieldwork online. For example, Amy and Alyssa decided that it would ethical to block out the usernames of all data collected by the students before the completion of this chapter. There is much debate about the ethics of including usernames. Some believe that because they are publicly available, they can be included without any consultation, while others believe that individuals should be informed that their usernames are being used in research. However, an additional aspect of conducting digital anthropology is researcher safety – it is much easier to track down information digitally from a handle or username. Because of this, Amy and Alyssa made the decision to remove usernames both in terms of ethics for the interlocutors and for the student researchers.

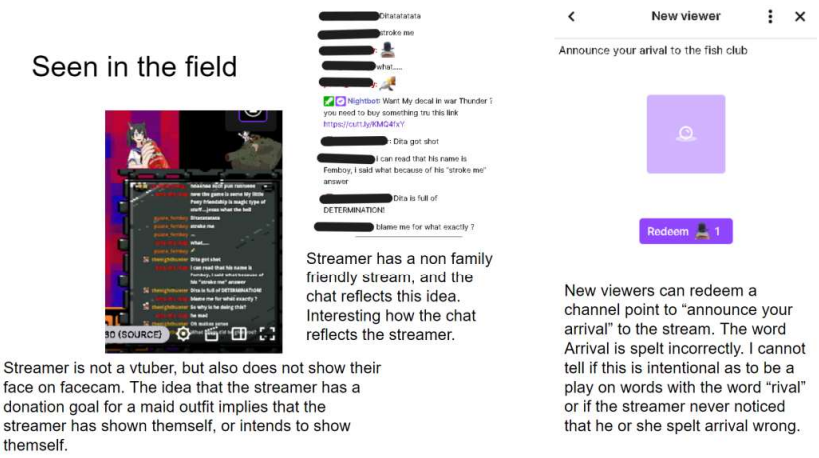


Figure 9. *Screenshot from Group 3's fieldnotes hints at the occasionally "non family friendly" content. Alongside this explicit content, students also encountered misogynistic, racist, and homophobic content. Navigating this disturbing content was often a subject of their individual fieldnotes as well as class discussions about safety and wellbeing in the field.*

In our work, we examined the website Twitch, a video live-streaming service which hosts a number of content creators, including most prominently video gamers, who stream their gameplay to an audience live. In addition to Twitch, which was our primary field site, other groups members explored past streams uploaded to the video-sharing service YouTube, as well as sites such as Reddit and Fandom Wikis related to our selected game, Undertale.

Undertale is an RPG (role-playing game) created by game developer Toby Fox. The game was released in 2015 after successful crowdfunding and has since amassed a cult following; it has a retro feel with its pixelated character design, charming animations,

engaging storyline, and captivating musical score. The premise of the game involves the story of a child named Frisk who falls into an underground world of monsters and must solve puzzles in order to escape, meeting an interesting cast of characters along the way. Frisk, whose voice is provided by text alone, is played by the gamer and retains an ambiguous gender identity (which, as we will subsequently discuss, is a significant point of tension within the Undertale community). Broadly, the game is understood to have three variations of play: neutral (where the player can choose to kill and spare some creatures), pacifist (where the player does not kill creatures, and spares and dates main characters), and genocide (where the player kills creatures). In studying Undertale streams, we observed a number of different streamers on both Twitch and Youtube who took up a wide variety of approaches and variously adopted these variations of play, as well as some other key markers. These include: streamers completing genocide and pacifist runs, speedrunning (an instance of completing a video game, or level of a game, as fast as possible), and VTubers (Virtual YouTubers originally, but a catch-all term to describe streamers who use an animated avatar, often drawn from an anime character style).

Our methods, described in detail in the upcoming section, were ethnographic and included participant observation by way of "lurking." Rather than engage with streamers or viewers directly (ex: participating in chat, interviewing participants), we observed game-play as essentially invisible third-parties, taking note of what we saw, experienced, and felt in the process. In doing so,

we embraced a method of following the "digital links" that emerged, exploring relevant sites such as Reddit and Fandom Wikis—social news, forum-style websites—in order to learn more about game play. Creating fieldnotes entailed taking screenshots, copy and pasting chat data, inserting GIFS and links, and collecting and analyzing memes.

When we entered the Twitch field site for the first time, the many controls, panels, links, clips, streamers, vods (video on demand, or pre-recorded streaming sessions), VTubers, and sections were overwhelming, and we were shocked by the sheer volume of content available. While a few of our team members had prior knowledge of Undertale and of Twitch more broadly, this was others' first introduction to both the streaming platform and game. Team members with more experience explained the basics to the group, assisting in everyone's entry to the field. Although still often confused by the medium, we accepted Postill and Pink's (2012) description of the internet as a "messy fieldwork environment" (pp. 125) that should be embraced by fieldworkers.[4] This became a key part of our methods as we explored sites such as Reddit, Fandom Wikis, Urban

4. Alexandria Onuoha has similarly asserted that if research isn't messy, you aren't doing it right. Interview with Amy Mack, March 2023.

Dictionary[5], and other knowledge-based sites, finding and creating what Christine Hine would term "online traces" (pp. 125, as cited in Postill and Pink) to seek out answers to emerging questions.

We approached this project differently each week. Some of us watched different streamers every week; some of us pursued the same streamer week after week; some of us focused on contrasting pacifist and genocide runs; and some looked at different ways to play the game, such as speedrunning. All of us, however, focused on streamers and how they interact with the chat and play the game, and considered what digital anthropology might tell us about this. Similar to Nardi's (2010, pp. 27) approach to her fieldwork on the MMORPG[6] World of Warcraft, we began with no clear research objectives, narrowing down our own interest as our project progressed.

Our observation of Twitch streams could be categorized as "lurking": we did not create Twitch accounts and instead watched without interacting with or being perceived by the streamer and viewers. While using different approaches in our observations, we each attended to both the stream (paying attention to the

5. Urban dictionary is an online dictionary for slang, typically that which is found in digital spaces.

6. Massively multiplayer online role-playing game.

behavior and gameplay of the streamer), the chat, and the streamer's Twitch profiles (including their About page). As it was not always possible to attend to every detail during the stream—particularly depending on the speed of the chat—some of us chose to alter our attention between the two, while slower moving chats allowed for simultaneous attention to both. While observing we produced fieldnotes and jottings—some by hand, others digitally—took screenshots, and occasionally visited other links while the stream continued to play in the background. Our findings largely centered on how the streamer interacted with the chat, a general trend we noticed being that "bigger" or more popular streamers, often seen in vods on YouTube, tended to mention comments and chats of note, and ignored the chats that were "not worth" pointing out. Smaller streamers, often VTubers on Twitch, pointed out or responded to almost every comment or chat.

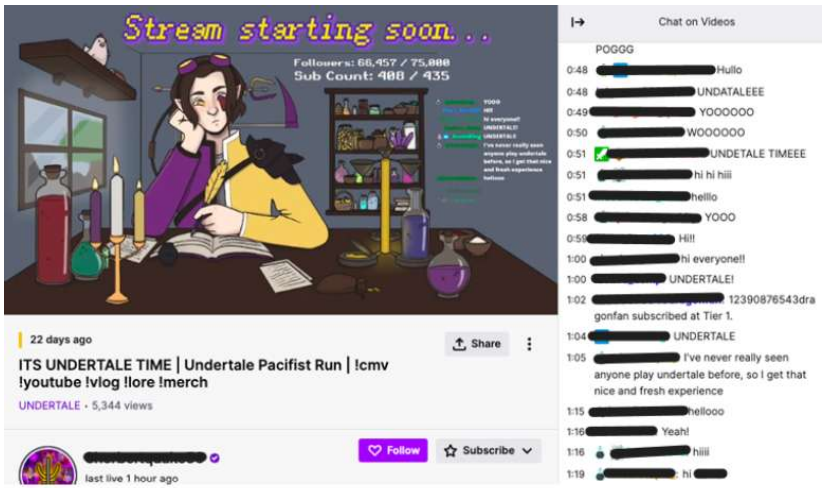


Figure 10. *Screenshot from Group 3's field notes. The group included the shot to help the reader understand the visual context of their fieldwork, not unlike traditional anthropologists might include photographs of the villages they visited.*

There were more things we noticed with the connection between the streamer and the chat. Digital anthropology has powerful methods for understanding what takes place online. Twitch as a field site has endless information and is also a site of powerful parasocial relationships between streamers and their chat viewers; a chat can "know" a streamer inside and out while a streamer may have no idea that these individuals exist. These online places and chats, we learned, contribute greatly to expressing and developing identity. Many of the people who watch streamers are children with developing identity; children's identities can easily be shaped by these online spaces that they exist in. This is further proven by another one of our findings, that the chat and the streamer seem to mirror

each other, or that the chat is a reflection of the streamer they are watching.

The fieldnotes that we produced were multimodal, and included text, screenshots of and copy-and-pasted chat dialogue, descriptions of gameplay, links to streamers or related sites, and sometimes, GIFs. Given that our field notes were taken from many different sites, as fieldworkers we created our own field site much like Postill and Pink (2012) describe, an idea expanded upon by Gupta and Ferguson (1995) when describing how anthropologists change or create their own field site when they enter them.

–Group 3 (Amy C., Kale H., Megan P., Reed R.)

Social Movements and Online Communities

As we previously discussed in this chapter, part of what drove many anthropologists to digital anthropology was the increase in online communities, and how they engaged with broader social movements. Many anthropologists have examined how social movements spread online amongst digital communities (usually through social media sites such as Twitter, Reddit, Facebook, or TikTok), and how these social movements exist both in digital and physical spaces. It is becoming increasingly common for protests to be coordinated, shared, and engaged with in online spaces, for them to eventually be shifted into offline spaces. Alternatively, anthropologists are becoming increasingly interested in how traditionally 'offline' or 'underground' movements (such as white

supremacy), are beginning to infiltrate and spread in online spaces due to the ability to remain anonymous.

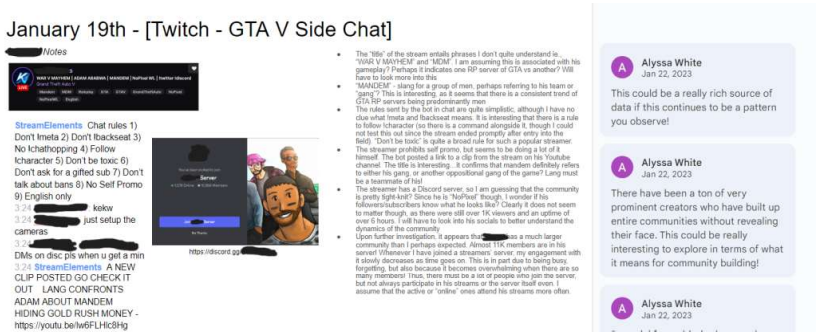


Figure 11. *Screenshot of Group 5's group field notes. The slide is densely filled with information about the channel the student was observing, including the rules for the chat, information about their discord server, a list of emic terminology that she was encountering and not yet understanding, as well as comments from Alyssa.*

Many use Twitch to engage in livestreamed gameplay of popular video games, such as our game of focus: Grand Theft Auto Five (GTA-V). GTA-V originally premiered in 2013 and has been re-released four times since, yet is considered to be a commercial success with one estimate suggesting the game has generated a $7.7 billion revenue (Gower, 2023). With various roleplaying servers now available, the game provides an open-world for online players to freely roam and express creativity. Multiple connections are fostered when roleplaying occurs in GTA-V Twitch streams, which our research will exemplify.

Grand Theft Auto-V has garnered a reputation for the violent and sexualized gameplay opportunities it

provides to gamers, for which Twitch has served as a sharing medium via streams involving both shallow and deep play (Geertz, 1972). This is to say that regardless of individual player investment and goals, (c)overt misogyny persists. We observed such an environment in the GTA-V roleplaying game servers where there were numerous incidents of blatant misogyny, hyper-sexualization of female avatars, and even outright commentary perpetuating violent intent to psychologically and physically harm women.

In speaking to the general disdain for women participating in GTA-V gameplay, our team recorded exemplars remarkably similar to what Nardi (2010) describes as belonging to a 'boy's treehouse' mindset. This is the idea that women have invaded a space where they are unwelcome and often experience events of discomfort that require a choice between toleration of behavior, or withdrawal from participation. Our fieldnotes reiterated how multiple female players were immediately marked as an object of possession or desire, whereby their characters were reduced to another reward for male players to acquire. In one instance, the presence of a female avatar led to an onslaught of chat comments about initiating gameplay to "get motion" with said character in a romantic/sexual manner, while also referencing the character as a 'W hoe"[7].

7. This term was used by an audience member in the

Female avatars also experience more sexualized ranges of avatar building options than male characters, reflecting content from the 'Lingerie is not Armour' video on how frequently female characters are not given the same degree of expansive realization (Miller & Slater, 2000). This is subject to variation in specific game locations, as well as other noted autonomous discrepancies between the appearance of playable versus non-playable avatars. A large portion of the available fashion is frequently not created by female developers (Sarkeesian, 2016).

Streamer attitude towards women consisted of covert discussion or overt bullying. Many of us observed streams that lacked the presence of a female at all, much less a female leader during team activities, indicating the recurring presence of an unwelcoming GTA-V 'boys treehouse' from which female players may feel or be physically excluded (Nardi, 2010).We found across our data that there were many moments where female game-players were ignored, even when teamwork was required to complete a task and such avoidance impeded in-game goals. This covert action

chat, and the term was aimed at the female character within the stream. The 'W' is potentially meant to refer to 'win'. 'Hoe' is colloquial slang for promiscuous behavior. Combined, this term suggests that 'getting with' the female character is an act to be praised.

grew into overt commentary and action, as when one example of overtly problematic commentary was observed by a streamer, who remarked to his audience how "relationship roleplaying [in GTA-V] is only good if there is domestic violence involved."

Perhaps the most concerning feature of these behaviors is the manner in which they remain unchallenged by the streamer's (and general gaming) communities. Our fieldnotes did not include examples of female players 'fighting back' with equal verbal aggression against males and aggressors, nor in explicit within-gameplay reactions. Rather, misogynistic comments made by streamers were celebrated within the Twitch chat function, receiving agreement instead of resistance by many males engaging in hegemonic displays of masculinity. Accordingly, one study found gaming was positively correlated with internalized misogyny for women who did not embrace feminist identity and its positive aspects (McCullough et al., 2019). Derogatory comments were also not well moderated, which facilitated the flooding of negativity within chat.

It would not be too far of a cognitive leap to suggest that such comments remaining unchallenged may lead to the creation of anti-feminist spaces, and the rise of 'grifters' (such as Andrew Tate) who utilize the rhetoric to become 'Alpha Male Influencers'. Given the similarity in anti-feminist commentary we witnessed on Twitch, perhaps some streamers see their platform and GTA-V as an opportunity to build their self-made misogynistic empires, with the aim of rising to similar 'alpha' status.

> Furthermore, the lack of confrontation against misogynistic content suggests that GTA-V communities have become their own male market. The behavior that occurs within becomes justified, aligning with Borchard (2015) who proposes that GTA's niche is for "men who feel like they are losing power to women all around them…" and thus, GTA serves as "one of the untouchable spaces where they can do whatever they want to whomever they want."
>
> –**Group 5** (Xena V., Numa S., Annie E., Dominik K., Alexander O.)

CONCLUSION

We want to end this chapter with a few notes on digital anthropology and the possibilities of the field moving forward. As we discussed throughout the chapter, the field of anthropology has responded to changes in the cultural landscape around it. The 1980s looked different than the 90s, and so too did digital anthropology. We also took up and responded to the moral panics of day (see Bareither 2018; Cohen 2011). Today, we teach digital anthropology in the wake of the Covid-19 global pandemic, which saw the digitization of much of our daily lives. Even as some push for a return to pre-pandemic practices, it is obvious that the move to online has fundamentally reshaped how we live, work, and socialize. This has also influenced the field of anthropology as more researchers consider the possibilities of tech-based methodologies

to augment their more traditional approaches, while others are forced to contend with returning to an increasingly online field site.

We are also in an era marked by a panic–moral or otherwise–over the spread of dis/misinformation online. The rise of anti-vax and anti-science movements in Canada, as well as a seemingly global resurgence of anti-trans movements, has once again reoriented our attention to social media. It is vital for anthropologists to weigh in on these pressing social issues to put them in broader cultural and historical contexts, and to provide critical reflexivity to the conversation.

REFERENCES

Boellstorff, T. (2015). *Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human*. Princeton University Press.

Boellstorff, T., Nardi, B., Pearce, C. and Taylor, T.L. (2012). *Ethnography and virtual worlds: A handbook of methods*. Princeton University Press.

Cohen, S. (2011). Whose side were we on? The undeclared politics of the moral panic theory. *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal*, 7(3).

Coleman, E.G. (2010). Ethnographic approaches to digital media. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39(1), 487-505.

Downey, G.L., Dumit, J., and Willaims, S. (1995). Cyborg anthropology. *Cultural Anthropology*, 10(2), 254-269.

Escobar, A. (1994). Welcome to cyberia: Notes on the anthropology of cyberculture. *Current Anthropology*, 35(3), 211-231. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2744194&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1696633439768322&usg=AOvVaw3r9vU-cAD5Ku3brf-ScAPF

Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (1997). *Anthropological locations, boundaries, and grounds of a field science.* University of California Press.

Hine, C. (2000). *Virtual ethnography*. Sage Publications.

McGranahan, C. (2018). Ethnography beyond method: The importance of an ethnographic sensibility. *Sites: A journal of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies*, 15(1).

Michaelsen, L.K. and Sweet, M. (2008). The essential elements of team-based learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 116, 7-27.

Miller, D., and Slater, D. (2000). *The internet: An ethnographic approach. Routledge.*

Monson, M.J. (2012). Race-Based Fantasy Realm: Essentialism in the World of Warcraft. *Games and Culture*, 7(1), 48-71.

Nardi, B. (2010). *My life as a night elf priest: An anthropological account of World of Warcraft.* University of Michigan Press.

Postill, J. and Pink, S. (2012). Social media ethnography: The digital researcher in a messy web. *Media International Australia*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X1214500114&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1696633439779805&usg=AOvVaw0MXbSkCeqsPJyzVWjhiBlt

Ross, S. (2019). Being real on fake instagram: Likes, images, and media ideologies of value. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, *29*(2).

Taylor, T.L. (2015). *Raising the Stakes: E-sports and the professionalization of computer gaming*. MIT Press.

Turkle, S. (1997). *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the internet. Simon & Schuster.*

Turkle, S. (2005). *The second self: Computers and the human spirit.* MIT Press.

PART V

LIVELIHOOD AND ECONOMY

12. Subsistence and Economics

"Subsistence and Economics"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Sarah Lyon (sarah.lyon@uky.edu)
Isaac Shearn (Isaacshearn@gmail.com)

MODES OF SUBSISTENCE

Like all human systems, a society's subsistence system is intricately linked to other aspects of culture such as kinship, politics, and religion. Although we can study these systems in isolation, it is important to remember that in the real world all aspects of culture overlap in complex ways. Consider harvest rituals, for example, which are religious ceremonies focused on improving the food supply. These rituals are shaped by religious beliefs as well as the demands and challenges of obtaining food. Likewise, subsistence systems are the economic base of every

society. Working to put food on the table is the essential task of every family or household.

Anthropologists recognize four general types of food system known as modes of subsistence. The four modes of subsistence are foraging, pastoralism, horticulture, and agriculture. Each mode is defined by the tasks involved in obtaining food as well as the way members of the society are organized socially to accomplish these tasks. Because each mode of subsistence is tailored to particular ecological conditions, we can think of each culture's subsistence system as an adaptation, or a set of survival strategies uniquely developed to suit a particular environment. Because culture shapes the way we view and interact with the environment, different societies can adapt to similar environments in different ways. Foraging, sometimes known as hunting and gathering, describes societies that rely primarily on "wild" plant and animal food resources. Pastoralism is a subsistence system in which people raise herds of domesticated livestock. Horticulture is the small-scale cultivation of crops intended primarily for subsistence. Agriculture, the subsistence system used in the United States, involves the cultivation of domesticated plants and animals using technologies that allow for intensive use of the land. Can all societies be categorized neatly into one of these modes? No. In fact, almost every society combines one or more of these strategies into their subsistence practices. For example, in the United States there are individuals who participate in all of these subsistence modes, including foraging. When anthropologists analyze a subsistence system, they look for the dominant mode of subsistence, or the most typical way that members of a society procure food. So, while some people in the United States grow their own food or hunt wild animals, the dominant mode of subsistence is agriculture, and people obtain food primarily by purchasing it.

Foraging

"Why should we plant, when there are so many mongongos in the world?"
-/Xashe, !Kung forager[1]

Foraging is a mode of subsistence defined by its reliance on wild plant and animal food resources already available in the environment rather than on domesticated species that have been altered by human intervention. Foragers use a remarkable variety of practices to procure meals. Hunting for animal protein is central to the foraging lifestyle and foragers capture and consume a wide variety of animals, from squirrels caught with a bow and arrow or blow dart to buffalo once killed by the dozens in communal hunts. Fishing for marine resources forms the basis for acquiring protein in many foraging communities and includes a range of practices from exploiting coastal shellfish and crab, to harvesting offshore resources such as deep sea fish and marine mammals such as whales and seals. Augmenting the protein from hunting or fishing, gathered wild plant resources, such as fruits, nuts, roots, tubers, and berries typically provide a large percentage of the calories that go into any meal. Gathering requires expert knowledge of where plant resource can be found, when they will be best to harvest, and how to prepare them for consumption. Foraging is the only immediate return subsistence system.

Foraging societies tend to have what is called a broad spectrum diet: a diet based on a wide range of resources. Many of the foods regularly eaten by foragers, such as insects and worms, would not necessarily be considered edible by many people in the United States. For example, many people do not know that earthworms are

1. [2]
2. [3]

a good source of iron and high-quality protein, roughly equivalent to eggs, but that is exactly what anthropologists learned by studying the diet of foraging societies in Venezuela.[3] Foragers are scientists of their own ecosystems, having acquired extensive knowledge of the natural world through experience that allows them to exploit many kinds of food resources. The Aché, a foraging group living in the subtropical rainforest in Paraguay, eat 33 different kinds of mammals, more than 15 species of fish, the adult forms of 5 insects, 10 types of larvae, and at least 14 kinds of honey. This is in addition to finding and collecting 40 species of plants.[5]

In general, foraging societies are small, with low population densities of less than 5 people per square mile. Large families and communities are not necessarily desirable since more mouths to feed can equate to increased pressure to find food. Another factor that contributes to a lower population density is the fact that it is more difficult for the young and the elderly to participate in food procurement. Children only gradually acquire the skills necessary to successfully find food and generally do not make significant contributions to the group until their teenage years. Likewise, elders who can no longer produce enough food themselves expect to be cared for by others.[7]

One important hallmark of foraging societies is their egalitarian social structure. Stark differences in wealth, which characterize many societies, are rare in foraging communities. One reason for this is that foragers have a different perspective on private property. Foraging societies tend to move their camps frequently to exploit

3. [4]
4. [4]
5. [6]
6. [5]
7. [8]
8. [7]

various resources, so holding on to a lot of personal possessions or "wealth" is impractical. Foragers also place a high cultural value on generosity. Sharing of food and other resources is a social norm and a measure of a person's goodness. Those who resist sharing what they have with others will be ridiculed, or could even become social outcasts.[9] Over the long term, daily habits of giving and receiving reinforce social equality. This practice is also an important survival strategy that helps groups get through times of food scarcity.

Though foragers have high levels of social equality, not everyone is treated exactly the same. Gender inequality exists in many communities and develops from the fact that work among foragers is often divided along gender lines. Some jobs, such as hunting large animals, belong to men whose success in hunting gives them high levels of respect and prestige. While women do hunt in many communities and often contribute the majority of the group's food through gathering, their work tends not to be as socially prestigious.[11] Likewise, elders in foraging communities tend to command respect and enjoy a higher social status, particularly if they have skills in healing or ritual activities.

Rule-Breaking Foragers

Nomadic lifestyles are the norm for most foragers, but there have been some societies that have broken this rule and developed large-scale sedentary societies. This was possible in areas with abundant natural resources, most often fish. Historically, fishing formed the

9. [10]
10. [8]
11. [12]
12. [9]

foundation of large-scale foraging societies in Peru, the Pacific Northwest (the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw), and Florida (the Calusa). These societies all developed advanced fishing technologies that provided enough food surplus that some people could stop participating in food procurement activities.

The Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw of the Pacific Northwest provide an excellent example. In that region, the salmon that spawn in the rivers are so abundant that they could support sedentary populations of a size that would normally be associated with intensive agriculture. Because there was a surplus of food, some members of society were able to pursue other full-time occupations or specializations such as working as artisans or even becoming "chiefs." This led to wealth differences and social inequality that would not normally be found in a foraging community. Conscious of the corrosive effect of wealth and status differences on their community, the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw developed a tradition of potlatch, a kind of "extreme gift-giving" to neutralize some of these tensions.

Assessing the Foraging Lifestyle

In 1651, the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes became one of the first scholars to comment on foragers, describing their lifestyle as "nasty, brutish, and short." We now realize that his viewpoint was colored by ethnocentrism and, more specifically, Eurocentrism. In the 1960s, the anthropological perspective on foragers changed when Marshall Sahlins suggested that these communities were "the original affluent society." He argued that foragers had an idyllic life, in which only a small percentage of the day was spent "working," or acquiring resources, and most of the day was spent in leisure and socializing, leading to stronger community and family bonds.

Today anthropologists recognize that foraging, far from being primitive, is one of the most effective and dynamic subsistence systems humans have ever developed, yet Sahlins' conception of the

original affluent society is overly romantic. Foraging is a challenging lifestyle; some groups spend up to 70 hours per week collecting food. The amount of leisure time and relative comfort of the foraging lifestyle vary significantly based on differences in the availability of food and environmental conditions.[13]

Contemporary studies of foraging also recognize that foragers have rarely lived in isolation. Throughout the world, foragers have lived near farming populations for hundreds or even thousands of years. Conflicts and competition for resources with non-foraging societies have characterized the foraging experience and foragers, with their relatively small population size and limited technology, have often been on the losing end of these confrontations. Government policies containing foragers to small "reservation" areas or forcing them to settle in towns have had catastrophic effects on foragers, as has the destruction through agricultural and industrial development of the ecosystems on which many groups once depended. A sad worldwide pattern of exploitation and marginalization is the reason that many foragers today live in dwindling communities in marginal ecological zones.[15]

Pastoralism

"To us, a co-wife is something very good, because there is much work to do. When it rains … the village gets mucky. And it's you who clears it out. It's you who … looks after the cows. You do the milking … and your husband may have very many cows. That's a lot of work… So Maasai

13. [14]
14. [11]
15. [16]
16. [12]

aren't jealous because of all this work."
– Maiyani, Maasai woman [17]

Pastoralism is a subsistence system that relies on herds of domesticated livestock. Over half of the world's pastoralists reside in Africa, but there are also large pastoralist populations in Central Asia, Tibet, and arctic Scandinavia and Siberia. The need to supply grazing fields and water for the livestock requires moving several times a year. For that reason, this subsistence system is sometimes referred to as nomadic pastoralism. In Africa, for instance, a nomadic lifestyle is an adaptation to the frequent periods of drought that characterize the region and put stress on the grazing pastures. Pastoralists may also follow a nomadic lifestyle for other reasons such as avoiding competition and conflict with neighbors or avoiding government restrictions.

Pastoralists can raise a range of different animals, although most often they raise herd animals such as cows, goats, sheep, and pigs. In some parts of South America, alpaca and llama have been domesticated for centuries to act as beasts of burden, much like camels, horses, and donkeys are used in Asia and Africa. Pastoralists who raise alpacas, donkeys, or camels, animals not typically considered food, demonstrate an important point about the pastoralist subsistence system. The goal of many pastoralists is not to produce animals to slaughter for meat, but instead to use other resources such as milk, which can be transformed into butter, yogurt, and cheese, or products like fur or wool, which can be sold. Even animal dung is useful as an alternate source of fuel and can be used as an architectural product to seal the roofs of houses. In some pastoral societies, milk and milk products comprise between 60 and 65 percent of the total caloric intake. However, very few, if any, pastoralist groups survive by eating only animal products. Trade

17. [18]
18. [15]

with neighboring farming communities helps pastoralists obtain a more balanced diet and gives them access to grain and other items they do not produce on their own.



A Typical Maasai Herd: Although women do most of the work of tending the herd, only men are allowed to own cattle

A community of animal herders has different labor requirements compared to a foraging community. Caring for large numbers of animals and processing their products requires a tremendous amount of work, chores that are nonexistent in foraging societies. For pastoralists, daily chores related to caring for livestock translate into a social world structured as much around the lives of animals as around the lives of people.

The Maasai, a society of east African pastoralists whose livelihood depends on cows, have been studied extensively by anthropologists. Among the Maasai, domestic life is focused almost entirely around tasks and challenges associated with managing the cattle herds. Like many pastoralist communities, the Maasai measure wealth and social status according to the number of animals a person owns. However, raising cattle requires so much work that no one has the ability to do these jobs entirely on his or her own. For the Maasai,

the solution is to work together in family units organized around polygynous marriages. A household with multiple wives and large numbers of children will have more labor power available for raising animals.

Pastoralism and Gender Dynamics

The example of the Maasai demonstrates the extent to which a subsistence system can structure gender roles and the division of labor between the sexes. In Maasai society, women do almost all of the work with the cows, from milking several times each day to clearing the muck the cows produce. Despite doing much of the daily work with cattle, Maasai women are not permitted to own cattle. Instead, the cattle belong to the men, and women are given only "milking rights" that allow them to use the products of the female animals and to assign these animals to their sons. Men make all decisions about slaughtering, selling, and raising the cattle. Lack of cattle ownership means that women do not have the same opportunities as men to build wealth or gain social status and the woman's role in Maasai society is subordinate to man's. This same pattern is repeated in many pastoralist societies, with women valued primarily for the daily labor they can provide and for their role as mothers.

While women lack the political and economic power enjoyed by Maasai men, they do exercise some forms of power within their own households and among other women. They support each other in the daily hard work of managing both cattle and domestic responsibilities, for instance sharing in childcare, a practice based on the belief that "men care about cattle while women care about children."[19] Because most marriages are arranged by elders, it is

19. [20]

common for women to engage in love affairs with other men, but women keep each other's secrets; telling anyone about another woman's adultery would be considered an absolute betrayal of solidarity. Women who resist their husband's authority by having love affairs are also resisting larger claims of male authority and ownership over them.[21]

Pastoralism and Private Property

As discussed previously, foragers tend to have little private property. Obtaining food from the natural environment and living a highly mobile lifestyle does not provide the right conditions for hoarding wealth, while the strong value on sharing present in foraging communities also limits wealth differences. Pastoralists, in contrast, have a great deal of personal property: most of it in the form of animals, a kind of "money on legs," but also in the form of household objects and personal items like clothing or jewelry that pastoralists can keep more easily than foragers because they do not move as frequently.

Ownership of the grazing land, water supply, and other resources required for livestock is a trickier matter. Generally, these natural resources are treated as communal property shared by everyone in the society. Pastoralists may range over hundreds of miles throughout the year, so it would be highly impractical to "own" any particular plot of land or to try fencing it to exclude outsiders as is commonly done by agriculturalists. Sharing resources can lead to conflict, however, both within pastoralist societies and between

20. [16]
21. [22]
22. [17]

pastoralists and their neighbors. In an influential essay, *Tragedy of the Commons* (1968), Garrett Hardin pointed out that people tend not to respect resources they do not own. For instance, pastoralists who have a personal interest in raising as many cattle of their own as possible may not be particularly motivated to preserve grass or water resources in the long term. Do pastoralists destroy the environments in which they live? Evidence from anthropological studies of pastoralist communities suggests that pastoralists do have rules that regulate use of land and other resources and that these restrictions are effective in conserving environmental resources.

The Maasai, for instance, have a complex land-management system that involves rotating pastures seasonally and geographically to preserve both grass and water. Research conducted in Kenya and Tanzania suggests that these grazing practices improve the health and biodiversity of the ecosystem because grazing cattle cut down the tall grasses and make habitats for warthogs, Thomson's gazelle, and other species. In addition, the large swaths of community land managed by the Maasai stabilize and support the vast Serengeti ecosystem. Ecologists estimate that if this land were privately owned and its usage restricted, the population of wildebeest would be reduced by one-third. Since thousands of tourists visit the Serengeti each year to view wildlife, particularly the migration of the wildebeest, which is the largest mammal migration in the world, the Maasai's communal land management is worth an estimated $83.5 million to the tourist economies of Kenya and Tanzania.[23]

Despite the sophistication of their land and animal management techniques, pastoralists today face many pressures. The growth of the tourism industry in many countries has led to increased demand for private land ownership to support safari centers, wild game parks, and ecolodges. The steady growth of human populations and

23. [24]

24. [18]

intensive agriculture has also led to the widespread encroachment of cities and farms into traditional pastoralist territories. Persistent drought, famine, and even civil war threaten some pastoralist groups, particularly in central Africa. Meanwhile, pastoralists continue to experience tense relationships with their agricultural neighbors as both groups compete for resources, disputes that are intensifying as global warming leads to more intense heat and drought in many world regions.

Horticulture

"*Yams are persons with ears. If we charm they hear.*"
– Alo, Trobriand Island farmer[25]

People whose gardens supply the majority of their food are known as horticulturalists. Horticulture differs in three ways from other kinds of farming. First, horticulturalists move their farm fields periodically to use locations with the best growing conditions. Second, horticultural societies use limited mechanical technologies to farm, relying on physical labor from people and animals, like oxen that may be used to pull a plow, instead of mechanical farm equipment. Finally, horticulture differs from other kinds of farming in its scale and purpose. Most farmers in the United States sell their crops as a source of income, but in horticultural societies crops are consumed by those who grow them or are shared with others in the community rather than sold for profit.

Horticultural societies are common around the world; this subsistence system feeds hundreds of thousands of people, primarily in tropical areas of south and central America, Southeast

25. [26]
26. [19]

Asia, and Oceania. A vast array of horticultural crops may be grown by horticulturalists, and farmers use their specialized knowledge to select crops that have high yield compared to the amount of labor that must be invested to grow them. A good example is manioc, also known as cassava. Manioc can grow in a variety of tropical environments and has the distinct advantage of being able to remain in the ground for long periods without rotting. Compared to corn or wheat, which must be harvested within a particular window of time to avoid spoiling, manioc is flexible and easier to grow as well as to store or distribute to others. Bananas, plantains, rice, and yams are additional examples of popular horticultural crops. One thing all these plants have in common, though, is that they lack protein and other important nutrients. Horticultural societies must supplement their diets by raising animals such as pigs and chickens or by hunting and fishing.



Bean plants grow up the stalk of a corn plant, while squash vines grow along the ground between corn stalks, inhibiting weed growth, an innovative technique developed by indigenous farmers in the Americas thousands of years ago.

Growing crops in the same location for several seasons leads to depletion of the nutrients in the soil as well as a concentration of insects and other pests and plant diseases. In agricultural systems like the one used in the United States, these problems are addressed through the use of fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation, and other technologies that can increase crop yields even in bad conditions. Horticulturalists respond to these problems by moving their farm fields to new locations. Often this means clearing a section of the forest to make room for a new garden, a task many horticulturalists accomplish by cutting down trees and setting controlled fires to burn away the undergrowth. This approach, sometimes referred to as "slash-and-burn," sounds destructive and has often been criticized, but the ecological impact is complex. Once abandoned, farm fields immediately begin to return to a forested state; over time, the quality of the soil is renewed. Farmers often return after several years to reuse a former field, and this recycling of farmland reduces the amount of forest that is disturbed. While they may relocate their farm fields with regularity, horticulturalists tend not to move their residences, so they rotate through gardens located within walking distance of their homes.

Horticulturalists practice multi-cropping, growing a variety of different plants in gardens that are biodiverse. Growing several different crops reduces the risk of relying on one kind of food

and allows for intercropping, mixing plants in ways that are advantageous. A well-known and ingenious example of intercropping is the practice of growing beans, corns, and squash together. Indigenous farmers in the pre-colonial period knew that together these plants, sometimes called "the three sisters," were healthier than they were if grown separately. Rather than completely clearing farmland, horticulturalists often maintain some trees and even weeds around the garden as a habitat for predators that prey on garden pests. These practices, in addition to skillful rotation of the farmland itself, make horticultural gardens particularly resilient.

Food as Politics

Because daily life for horticulturalists revolves around care for crops, plants are not simply regarded as food but also become the basis for social relationships. In the Trobriand Islands, which are located in the Solomon Sea north of Papua New Guinea, yams are the staple crop. Just as a Maasai pastoralist gains respect by raising a large herd of animals, Trobriand Island farmers earn their reputations by having large numbers of yams. However, this is not as easy as it might seem. In Trobriand Island society every man maintains a yam garden, but he is not permitted to keep his entire crop. Women "own" the yams and men must share what they grow with their daughters, their sisters, and even with their wives' family members. Other yams must be given to the chief or saved to exchange on special occasions such as weddings, funerals, or festivals. With so many obligations, it is not surprising that the average man would have trouble building an impressive yam pile on his own. Fortunately, just as men have obligations to others, so too can they expect gifts from their sisters' husbands and their friends in the community.

A large pile of yams, displayed proudly in a man's specially

constructed yam house, is an indication of how well he is respected by his family and friends. Maintaining these positive relationships requires constant work, and men must reciprocate gifts of yams received from others or risk losing those relationships. Men who are stingy or mean spirited will not receive many yams, and their lack of social approval will be obvious to everyone who glances at their empty yam houses. The chief has the largest yam house of all, but also the most obligations. To maintain the goodwill of the people, he is expected to sponsor feasts with his yam wealth and to support members of the community who may need yams throughout the year.

So central are yams to Trobriand Island life that yams have traditionally been regarded not as mere plants, but as living beings with minds of their own. Farmers talk to their yams, using a special tone and soft voice so as not to alarm the vegetables. Men who have been initiated into the secret practices of yam magic use incantations or magical charms to affect the growth of the plants, or alternatively to discourage the growth of a rival's crop. Yams are believed to have the ability to wander away from their fields at night unless magic is used to keep them in place. These practices show the close social and spiritual association between farmers and their crops.

Agriculture

"*The adoption of agriculture, supposedly our most decisive step toward a better life, was in many ways a catastrophe from which we have never recovered.*"
– Jared Diamond [27]

27. [28]
28. [21]

Agriculture is defined as the cultivation of domesticated plants and animals using technologies such as irrigation, draft animals, mechanization, and inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides that allow for intensive and continuous use of land resources. About 10,000 years ago, human societies entered a period of rapid innovation in subsistence technologies that paved the way for the emergence of agriculture. The transition from foraging to farming has been described as the Neolithic Revolution. Neolithic means "new stone age," a name referring to the very different looking stone tools produced during this time period. The Neolithic was characterized by an explosion of new technologies, not all of them made from stone, which were geared toward agricultural tasks, rather than hunting or processing gathered plant foods. These new tools included scythes for harvesting plants, and adzes or hoes for tilling the soil. These technological developments began to dramatically improve yields and allow human communities to support larger and larger numbers of people on food produced in less space. It is important to remember that the invention of agriculture was not necessarily an advance in efficiency, because more work had to go in to producing more food. Instead, it was an *intensification* of horticultural strategies. As a subsistence system, agriculture is quite different from other ways of making a living, and the invention of agriculture had far-ranging effects on the development of human communities. In analyzing agriculture and its impacts, anthropologists focus on four important characteristics shared by agricultural communities.

The first characteristic of agriculture is reliance on a few staple crops, foods that form the backbone of the subsistence system. An example of a staple crop would be rice in China, or potatoes in Ireland. In agricultural societies, farmers generally grow a surplus of these staple crops, more than they need for their own tables, which are then sold for profit. The reliance on a single plant species, or mono-cropping, can lead to decreased dietary diversity and carries the risk of malnutrition compared to a more diverse diet.

Other risks include crop failure associated with bad weather conditions or blight, leading to famine and malnutrition, conditions that are common in agricultural communities.

A second hallmark of agriculture is the link between intensive farming and a rapid increase in human population density. The archaeological record shows that human communities grew quickly around the time agriculture was developing, but this raises an interesting question. Did the availability of more food lead to increases in human population? Or, did pressure to provide for a growing population spur humans to develop better farming techniques? This question has been debated for many years. Ester Boserup, who studied the emergence of agriculture, concluded that growth in human populations preceded the development of agriculture, forcing communities to develop innovations in technology. However, the improved productive capabilities of agriculture came at a cost. People were able to produce more food with agriculture, but only by working harder and investing more in the maintenance of the land. The life of a farmer involved more daily hours of work compared to the lifestyle of a forager, so agricultural communities had an incentive to have larger families so that children could help with farm labor. However, the presence of more children also meant more mouths to feed, increasing the pressure to further expand agricultural production. In this way, agriculture and population growth became a cycle.

A third characteristic of agriculture is the development of a division of labor, a system in which individuals in a society begin to specialize in certain roles or tasks. Building houses, for instance, becomes a full-time job separate from farming. The division of labor was possible because higher yields from agriculture meant that the quest for food no longer required everyone's participation. This feature of agriculture is what has allowed nonagricultural occupations such as scientists, religious specialists, politicians, lawyers, and academics to emerge and flourish.

The emergence of specialized occupations and an agricultural system geared toward producing surplus rather than subsistence

changed the economics of human communities. The final characteristic of agriculture is its tendency to create wealth differences. For anthropologists, agriculture is a critical factor explaining the origins of social class and wealth inequality. The more complex an economic system becomes, the more opportunities individuals or factions within the society have to manipulate the economy for their own benefit. Who do you suppose provided the bulk of the labor power needed in early agricultural communities? Elites found ways to pass this burden to others. Agricultural societies were among the first to utilize enslaved and indentured labor.

Although the development of agriculture is generally regarded as a significant technological achievement that made our contemporary way of life possible, agriculture can also be viewed as a more ominous development that forced us to invest more time and labor in our food supply while yielding a lower quality of life.[29] Agriculture created conditions that led to the expansion of social inequality, violent conflict between communities, and environmental degradation. For these reasons, some scientists like Jared Diamond have argued that the invention of agriculture was humanity's worst mistake.

THE GLOBAL AGRICULTURE SYSTEM

"We can indeed eliminate the scourge of hunger in our lifetime. We must be the Zero Hunger generation."

29. [30]

30. [22]

– José Graziano da Silva, Director General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations [31]

Despite agriculture's tremendous productivity, food shortages, malnutrition, and famines are common around the world. How can this be? Many people assume that the world's agricultural systems are not capable of producing enough food for everyone, but this is incorrect. Evidence from agricultural research demonstrates that there is enough worldwide agricultural capacity to feed everyone on the planet.[33] The problem is that this capacity is unevenly distributed. Some countries produce much more food than they need, and others much less. In addition, distribution systems are inefficient and much food is lost to waste or spoilage. It is also true that in an agricultural economy food costs money, and worldwide many people who are starving or undernourished lack food because they cannot pay for it, not because food itself is unavailable.

Let's return for a moment to the concept of meals and where our food actually comes from. Walking down the aisles of our local grocery store, we are surrounded by products that come from far away: apples from Chile, coffee from Guatemala, beans from India. This is evidence that our economy is organized around what anthropologists refer to as a world system, a complex web through which goods circulate around the globe. In the world system, complex chains of distribution separate the producers of goods from the consumers. Agricultural products travel long distances from their points of origin to reach consumers in the grocery store, passing through many hands along the way. The series of steps a

31. [32]
32. [26]
33. [34]
34. [27]

food like apples or coffee takes from the field to the store is known as a commodity chain.



Links in the Commodity Chain for Coffee: As the coffee changes hands from the growers, to the exporters, to the importers, and then to the retail distributors, the value of the coffee increases. Consider the differences in wage between these workers.

The commodity chain for agricultural products begins in the farms where plant and animal foods are produced. Farmers generally do not sell their produce directly to consumers, but instead sell to large food processors that refine the food into a more usable form. Coffee beans, for instance, must be roasted before they can be sold. Following processing, food moves to wholesalers who will package it for sale to retail establishments like grocery stores. As foods move through the commodity chain, they become more

valuable. Coffee beans harvested fresh from the field are worth $1.40 per pound to the farmer, but sell for $10–$20 at Starbucks.[35]

The fact that food is more valuable at the end of the commodity chain than at the beginning has several consequences for human communities. The most obvious of these is the reality that farming is not a particularly lucrative occupation, particularly for small-scale farmers in developing countries. Though their labor makes profit for others, these farmers see the lowest financial returns. Another effect of global commodity chains is that food moves very far from its point of origin. For wealthy people, this means having access to a variety of foods in the grocery store, including things like strawberries or mangos in the middle of winter, but in order to serve markets in wealthy countries, food is diverted away from the locales where it is grown. When quinoa, a high-protein grain grown in Bolivia, became popular with health enthusiasts in wealthy countries, the price of this food more than tripled. Local populations began to export their quinoa crop rather than eating it, replacing this nutritious traditional food with white bread and Coca-Cola, which were much cheaper, but contributed to increased rates of obesity and diabetes.[37] The global travels of the food supply have also affected social relations that were once strengthened by participation in food growing and sharing. Distance and competition have replaced these communal experiences. Many people yearn for more connection with their food, a sentiment that fuels things like "foodie culture," farm-to-table restaurants, and farmer's markets.

35. [36]

36. [28]

37. [38]

38. [29]

Fair-Trade Coffee Farmers: 21st Century Peasants

Small-scale, semi-subsistence farmers make up the largest single group of people on the planet today. Once known as peasants, these people pose an interesting conundrum to economic anthropologists because they live their lives both inside and outside of global capitalism and state societies. These farmers primarily use their own labor to grow the food their families eat. They might also produce some type of commodity for sale. For example, many of the indigenous corn farmers in southern Mexico and Central America discussed earlier also produce small amounts of coffee that they sell in order to earn money to buy school supplies for their children, building supplies for their homes, clothing, and other things that they cannot produce themselves.

There are between 20 and 25 million small farmers growing coffee in more than 50 countries around the world. A portion of these small coffee farmers are organized into cooperatives in order to collectively sell their coffee as fair-trade certified. Fair trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency, and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. According to Fairtrade International, fair trade supports farmers and workers to combat poverty and strengthen their livelihoods by establishing a minimum price for as many fair-trade products as possible; providing, on top of stable prices, a fair-trade premium; improving the terms of trade for farmers by providing access to information, clear contracts with pre-payments, access to markets and financing; and promoting better living wages and working conditions.[39] In order to certify their coffee, small farmers must belong to democratically run producers' associations in which

39. [40]

40. [10]

participation is open to all eligible growers, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, or political affiliation.

To better understand how indigenous farmers practice kin-organized subsistence maize production while simultaneously producing an agricultural commodity for global markets, I conducted long-term research in a highland Guatemala community.[41] In 1977 a small number of Tz'utujil Maya coffee farmers formed a cooperative, *La Voz Que Clama en el Desierto* (A Voice Crying Out in the Wilderness), with the goal of securing higher prices for their agricultural products and escaping the severe poverty they struggled against on a daily basis. Since the early 1990s the group has produced high-quality organic and fair-trade certified coffee for the U.S. market.

The farmers work tirelessly to ensure that their families have sufficient corn to eat *and* that their coffee meets the cooperative's high standards of quality. The members of La Voz refer to their coffee trees as their "children" who they have lovingly tended for decades. High-quality, organic coffee production is time consuming and arduous—it requires almost daily attention. During the coffee harvest between December and March, wives, husbands, and children work together to pick the coffee cherries by hand as they ripen and carry them to the wet mill each afternoon.

41. [42]

42. [11]



Sorting Coffee Beans

While these farmers are producing a product for the global market, it is not strictly a capitalist mode of production. They own their own land and they sell the fruits of their labor for guaranteed prices. They also work cooperatively with one another, pooling and exchanging their labor, in order to guarantee the smooth functioning of their organization. This cooperation, while essential, is hard work. Because the fair-trade system does not rely on anonymous market exchanges, members of La Voz must also dedicate time to nurturing their relationships with the coffee importers, roasters, advocates, and consumers who support all their hard work through promotion and purchases. This means attending receptions when buyers visit, dressing up in traditional clothing to pick coffee on film for marketing materials, and putting up with questions from nosy anthropologists.

Because the coffee farmers also produce much of the food their families consume, they enjoy a great deal of flexibility. In times

of hardship, they can redirect their labor to other activities by intensifying corn production, migrating in search of wage labor, or planting other crops. Their ultimate goal is to maintain the family's economic autonomy, which is rooted in ownership of the means of production—in this case, their land. A close examination of these farmers' lives reveals that they are not relics of a precapitalist system. Instead, their economic activity is uniquely adapted to the contemporary global economy in order to ensure their long-term survival.

Salaula in Zambia: The Informal Economy

The informal economy includes a diverse range of activities that are unregulated (and untaxed) by the state: rickshaw pullers in Calcutta, street vendors in Mexico City, and scrap-metal recyclers in Lexington, Kentucky, are all considered informal workers. Informal economies include people who are informally self-employed *and* those working informally for other people's enterprises. In some parts of the world the informal economy is a significant source of income and revenue. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the informal economy generates nearly 40 percent as much revenue as that included in the "official" gross domestic product.[43] Consequently, the informal economy is of great interest to economic anthropologists. However, the term "informal economy" is critiqued by some scholars since often what we refer to as informal economies are actually quite formal and organized, even though this organization is not regulated by the state and may be based on an internal logic that makes the most sense to those who participate in the exchanges.

43. [44]

44. [12]

Karen Hansen provides an in-depth look at the lives of vendors in the *salaula*, the secondhand clothing markets in Zambia in southern Africa.[45] Salaula, a term that literally means "to rummage through a pile," is an unusual industry that begins in many of our own homes. In today's era of fast fashion in which Americans buy more than 20 billion garments each year (that's 68 garments per person!), many of us regularly bag up our gently used, unfashionable clothing and drop it off at a nearby Goodwill shop.[47] Only about half of these donated clothes actually end up in charity thrift stores. The rest are sold to one of the nearly 300 firms that specialize in the global clothing recycling business. The textile recycling firms sort the clothing by grades; the higher-quality items are sent to Central America, and the lowest grades go to African and Asian countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa an estimated 50 percent of purchased clothing consists of these secondhand imports, referred to by some consumers as "dead man's clothes" because of the belief that they come from the deceased.[49] In Zambia the secondhand clothes are imported in bulk by 40 wholesale firms that, in turn, sell the clothes to salaula traders. The traders sell the clothes out of their homes and in large public markets.

Typically the people working as salaula traders have either never had formal-sector jobs or have lost their jobs in the public or private sector. Often they start selling in order to accumulate money for other activities or as a sideline business. Hansen found that there were slightly more female sellers and that women were more likely to be single heads of households. Successful salaula trading requires

45. [46]
46. [13]
47. [48]
48. [14]
49. [50]
50. [15]

business acumen and practical skills. Flourishing traders cultivate their consumer knowledge, develop sales strategies, and experiment with display and pricing. While salaula trading has relatively low barriers to entry (one simply has to purchase a bale of clothing from a wholesale importer in order to get started), in this informal market scale is important: salaula moves best when traders have a lot of it on offer. Traders also have to understand the local cultural politics in order to successfully earn a living in this sector. For example, salaula is different from used clothing from people someone knows. In fact, secondhand clothing with folds and wrinkles from the bale is often the most desirable because it is easily identifiable as "genuine" salaula.[51]



Roadside Salaula Trader, Zambia

The global salaula commodity chain presents an interesting example of how material goods can flow in and out of capitalist modes of production and exchange. For example, I might buy a dress that was produced in a factory to give (not sell!) to my young niece. After wearing the dress for several months, Maddie will probably outgrow it, and her Mom will drop it off at the nearby Goodwill shop. There is a 50 percent chance that the dress will be sold by the charity to a clothing recycler who will export it to Zambia or a nearby country. From there the dress will end up in a bale of clothing that is purchased by a salaula trader in Lusaka. At this point the dress enters the informal economy as the salaula markets are unregulated and untaxed. A consumer might buy the dress and realize that it does not quite fit her own daughter. She might then take it to her neighbor, who works informally as a tailor,

51. [52]

52. [16]

for alternations. Rather than paying her neighbor for the work on the dress, the consumer might instead arrange to reciprocate at a later date by cleaning the tailor's home. This single item of clothing that has traveled the globe and moved in and out of formal and informal markets highlights how diverse our economic lives really are.

POLITICAL ECONOMY: UNDERSTANDING INEQUALITY

Humans are fundamentally social, and our culture is always shared and patterned: we live our lives in groups. However, not all groups serve the needs of their members, and some people have more power than others, meaning they can make the weak consent through threats and coercion. Within all societies there are classes of people defined by the kinds of property they own and/or the kinds of work they engage in.[53] Beginning in the 1960s, an increasing number of anthropologists began to study the world around them through the lens of political economy. This approach recognizes that the economy is central to everyday life but contextualizes economic relations within state structures, political processes, social structures, and cultural values.[55] Some political economic anthropologists focus on how societies and markets have historically evolved while others ask how individuals deal with the

53. [54]
54. [62]
55. [56]
56. [63]

forces that oppress them, focusing on historical legacies of social domination and marginalization. [57]

Karl Marx famously wrote, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past."[59] In other words, while humans are inherently creative, our possibilities are limited by the structural realities of our everyday lives.

Consider a typical college student. Is this student happy with the courses her department or college is offering? Are there courses that she needs to graduate that are not being offered yet? She is free to choose among the listed courses, but she cannot choose which courses are available. This depends on factors beyond her control as a student: who is available to teach which topics or what the administration has decided is important enough to offer. So, her agency and ability to choose is highly constrained by the structures in place. In the same way, political economies constrain people's choices and define the terms by which we must live. Importantly, it is not simply structures that determine our choices and actions; these are also shaped by our community.

Just as our college student may come to think of the requirements she has to fulfill for her degree as just the way it is (even if she does not want to take that theory course!), people come to think of their available choices in everyday life as simply the natural order of things. However, the degree of agency one has depends on the amount of power one has and the degree to which one understands the structural dimensions of one's life. This focus on power and structural relations parallels an anthropological understanding of

57. [58]
58. [64]
59. [60]
60. [65]

culture as a holistic system: economic relations never exist by themselves, apart from social and political institutions.

Structural Violence and the Politics of Aid in Haiti

Anthropologists interested in understanding economic inequalities often research forms of structural violence present in the communities where they work.[61] Structural violence is a form of violence in which a social structure or institution harms people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. In other words, how political and economic forces structure risk for various forms of suffering within a population. Structural violence can include things like infectious disease, hunger, and violence (torture, rape, crime, etc.).

The United States tends to focus on individuals and personal experiences. A popular narrative holds that if you work hard enough you can "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" in this country of immigrants and economic opportunity. The converse of this ideology is victim blaming: the logic is that if people are poor it is their own fault.[63] However, studying structural violence helps us understand that for some people there simply is no getting ahead and all one can hope for is survival.

The conditions of everyday life in Haiti, which only worsened after the 2010 earthquake, are a good example of how structural violence limits individual opportunities. Haiti is the most unequal

61. [62]
62. [66]
63. [64]
64. [67]

country in Latin America and the Caribbean: the richest 20 percent of its population holds more than 64 percent of its total wealth, while the poorest 20 percent hold barely one percent. The starkest contrast is between the urban and rural areas: almost 70 percent of Haiti's rural households are chronically poor (vs. 20 percent in cities), meaning they survive on less than $2 a day and lack access to basic goods and services.[65] Haiti suffers from widespread unemployment and underemployment, and more than two-thirds of people in the labor force do not have formal jobs. The population is not well educated, and more than 40 percent of the population over the age of 15 is illiterate.[67] According to the World Food Programme, more than 100,000 Haitian children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition and one in three children is stunted (or irreversibly short for their age). Only 50 percent of households have access to safe water, and only 25 percent have adequate sanitation.[69]

On January 12, 2010, a devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck this highly unequal and impoverished nation, killing more than 160,000 people and displacing close to 1.5 million more. Because the earthquake's epicenter was near the capital city, the National Palace and the majority of Haiti's governmental offices were almost completely destroyed. The government lost an estimated 17 percent of its workforce. Other vital infrastructure, such as hospitals, communication systems, and roads, was also

65. [66]
66. [68]
67. [68]
68. [69]
69. [70]
70. [70]

damaged, making it harder to respond to immediate needs after the quake.[71]

The world responded with one of its most generous outpourings of aid in recent history. By March 1, 2010, half of all U.S. citizens had donated a combined total of $1 billion for the relief effort (worldwide $2.2 billion was raised), and on March 31, 2010 international agencies pledged $5.3 billion over the next 18 months.[73] The anthropologist Mark Schuller studied the aftermath of the earthquake and the politics of humanitarianism in Haiti. He found that little of this aid ever reached Haiti's most vulnerable people, the 1.5 million people living in the IDP (internally displaced persons) camps. Less than one percent of the aid actually was given to the Haitian government. The largest single recipient was the U.S. military (33 percent), and the majority of the aid was dispersed to foreign-run non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Haiti.

Because so little of this aid reached the people on the ground who needed it most, seven months following the disaster 40 percent of the IDP camps did not have access to water, and 30 percent did not have toilets of any kind. Only ten percent of families in the camps had a tent and the rest slept under tarps or bedsheets. Only 20 percent of the camps had education, health care, or mental health facilities on-site.[75] Schuller argues that this failure constitutes a violation of the Haitian IDP's human rights, and it is linked to a long history of exploitative relations between Haiti and the rest of the world.

Haiti is the second oldest republic in the Western Hemisphere

71. [72]

72. [71]

73. [74]

74. [72]

75. [76]

76. [73]

(after the United States), having declared its independence from France in 1804. Years later, in order to earn diplomatic recognition from the French government, Haiti agreed to pay financial reparations to the powerful nation from 1825 to 1947. In order to do so, Haiti was forced to take out large loans from U.S. and European banks at high interest rates. During the twentieth century, the country suffered at the hands of brutal dictatorships, and its foreign debts continued to increase. Schuller argues that the world system continually applied pressure to Haiti, draining its resources and forcing it into the debt bondage that kept it from developing. In the process, this system contributed to the very surplus that allowed powerful Western nations to develop.[77]

When the earthquake struck, Haiti's economy already revolved around international aid and foreign remittances sent by migrants (which represented approximately 25 percent of the gross domestic product).[79] Haiti had become a republic of NGOs that attract the nation's most educated, talented workers (because they can pay significantly higher wages than the national government, for example). Schuller argues that the NGOs constitute a form of "trickle-down imperialism" as they reproduce the world system.[81] The relief money funneled through these organizations ended up supporting a new elite class rather than the impoverished multitudes that so desperately need the assistance.

Anthropologists have identified forms of structural inequality in countless places around the world; anthropology can be a powerful tool for addressing the pressing social issues of our times. When

77. [78]
78. [74]
79. [80]
80. [75]
81. [82]
82. [76]

anthropological research is presented in an accessible and easily understood form, it can effectively encourage meaningful public conversations about questions such as how to best disperse relief aid after natural disasters.

PART VI

BODY, BLOOD AND BELONGING

13. Kinship and Marriage

"Family and Marriage"

from *Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*

Mary Kay Gilliland (gilliland@centralaz.edu)

Family and marriage may at first seem to be familiar topics. Families exist in all societies and they are part of what makes us human. However, societies around the world demonstrate tremendous variation in cultural understandings of family and marriage. Ideas about how people are related to each other, what kind of marriage would be ideal, when people should have children, who should care for children, and many other family related matters differ cross-culturally. While the function of families is to fulfill basic human needs such as providing for children, defining parental roles, regulating sexuality, and passing property and knowledge between generations, there are many variations or patterns of family life that can meet these needs. This chapter introduces some of the more common patterns of family life found around the world. It is important to remember that within any cultural framework variation does occur. Some variations on the standard pattern fall within what would be culturally considered the "range of acceptable alternatives." Other family forms are not entirely accepted, but would still be recognized by most members of the community as reasonable.

RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, STATUSES, AND ROLES IN FAMILIES

Some of the earliest research in cultural anthropology explored differences in ideas about family. Lewis Henry Morgan, a lawyer who also conducted early anthropological studies of Native American cultures, documented the words used to describe family members in the Iroquois language.[1] In the book *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1871), he explained that words used to describe family members, such as "mother" or "cousin," were important because they indicated the rights and responsibilities associated with particular family members both within households and the larger community. This can be seen in the labels we have for family members—titles like father or aunt—that describe how a person fits into a family as well as the obligations he or she has to others.

The concepts of status and role are useful for thinking about the behaviors that are expected of individuals who occupy various positions in the family. The terms were first used by anthropologist Ralph Linton and they have since been widely incorporated into social science terminology.[3] For anthropologists, a status is any culturally-designated position a person occupies in a particular setting. Within the setting of a family, many statuses can exist such as "father," "mother," "maternal grandparent," and "younger brother." Of course, cultures may define the statuses involved in a family differently. Role is the set of behaviors expected of an individual

1. [2]
2. [1]
3. [4]
4. [2]

who occupies a particular status. A person who has the status of "mother," for instance, would generally have the role of caring for her children.

Roles, like statuses, are cultural ideals or expectations and there will be variation in how individuals meet these expectations. Statuses and roles also change within cultures over time. In the not-so-distant past in the United States, the roles associated with the status of "mother" in a typical Euro-American middle-income family included caring for children and keeping a house; they probably did not include working for wages outside the home. It was rare for fathers to engage in regular, day-to-day housekeeping or childcare roles, though they sometimes "helped out," to use the jargon of the time. Today, it is much more common for a father to be an equal partner in caring for children or a house or to sometimes take a primary role in child and house care as a "stay at home father" or as a "single father." The concepts of status and role help us think about cultural ideals and what the majority within a cultural group tends to do. They also help us describe and document culture change. With respect to family and marriage, these concepts help us compare family systems across cultures.

KINSHIP AND DESCENT

Kinship is the word used to describe culturally recognized ties between members of a family. Kinship includes the terms, or social statuses, used to define family members and the roles or expected behaviors family associated with these statuses. Kinship encompasses relationships formed through blood connections (consanguineal), such as those created between parents and children, as well as relationships created through marriage ties (affinal), such as in-laws. Kinship can also include "chosen kin," who have no formal blood or marriage ties, but consider themselves to be family. Adoptive parents, for instance, are culturally recognized

as parents to the children they raise even though they are not related by blood.



These young Maasai women from Western Tanzania are affinal kin, who share responsibilities for childcare. Maasai men often have multiple wives who share domestic responsibilities. Photo used with permission of Laura Tubelle de González.

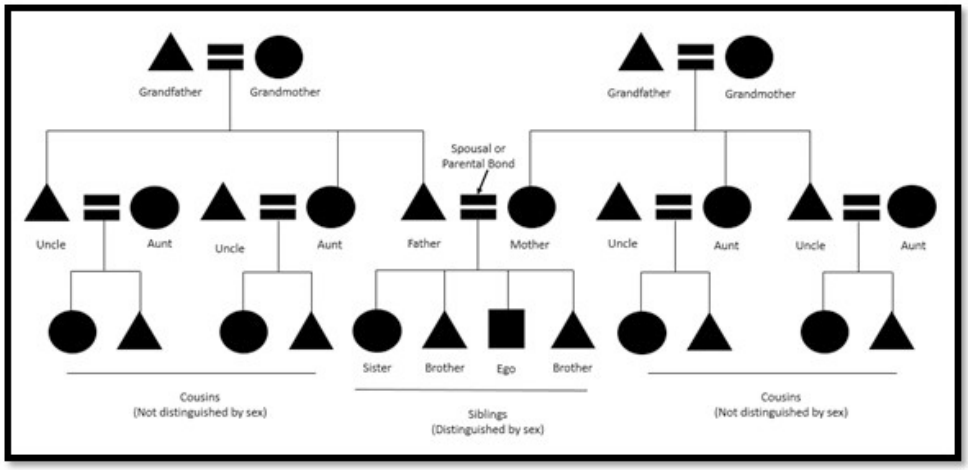
While there is quite a bit of variation in families cross-culturally, it is also true that many families can be categorized into broad types based on what anthropologists call a kinship system. The kinship system refers to the pattern of culturally recognized relationships between family members. Some cultures create kinship through only a single parental line or "side" of the family. For instance, families in many parts of the world are defined by patrilineal descent: the paternal line of the family, or fathers and their children. In other societies, matrilineal descent defines membership in the kinship group through the maternal line of relationships between mothers and their children. Both kinds of kinship are considered unilineal because they involve descent through only one line or side of the family. It is important to keep in mind that systems

of descent define culturally recognized "kin," but these rules do not restrict relationships or emotional bonds between people. Mothers in patrilineal societies have close and loving relationships with their children even though they are not members of the same patrilineage.[5] In the United States, for instance, last names traditionally follow a pattern of patrilineal descent: children receive last names from their fathers. This does not mean that the bonds between mothers and children are reduced. Bilateral descent is another way of creating kinship. Bilateral descent means that families are defined by descent from both the father and the mother's sides of the family. In bilateral descent, which is common in the United States, children recognize both their mother's and father's family members as relatives.

As we will see below, the descent groups that are created by these kinship systems provide members with a sense of identity and social support. Kinship groups may also control economic resources and dictate decisions about where people can live, who they can marry, and what happens to their property after death. Anthropologists use kinship charts to help visualize descent groups and kinship. The image below is a simple example of a kinship chart. This chart has been designed to help you see the difference between the kinship groups created by a bilateral descent system and a unilineal system.

5. [6]

6. [3]



This kinship chart illustrates bilateral descent.

Kinship diagrams use a specific person, who by convention is called Ego, as a starting point. The people shown on the chart are Ego's relatives. In the image above, Ego is in the middle of the bottom row. Most kinship charts use a triangle to represent males and a circle to represent females. Conventionally, an "equals sign" placed between two individuals indicates a marriage. A single line, or a hyphen, can be used to indicate a recognized union without marriage such as a couple living together or engaged and living together, sometimes with children.

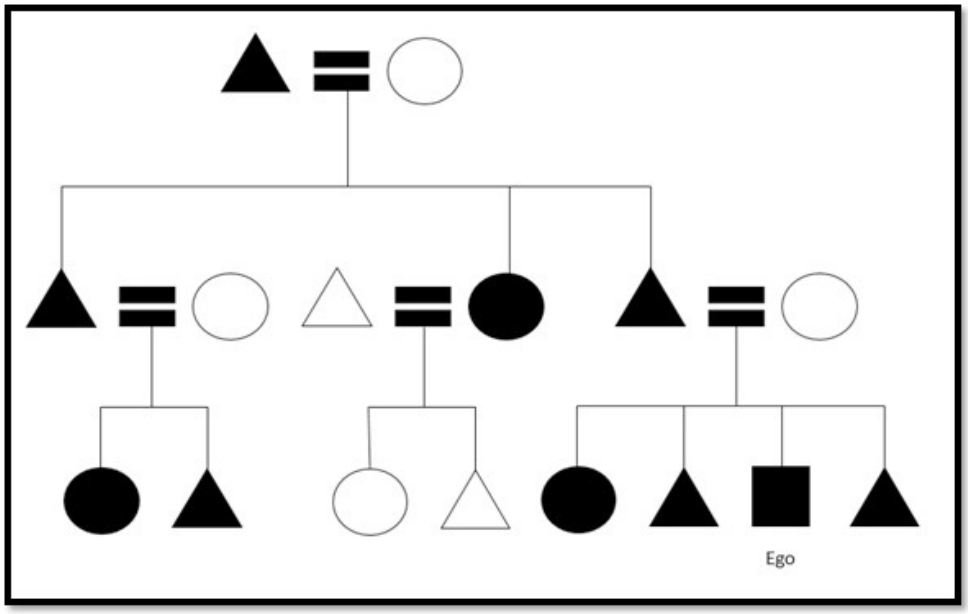
Children are linked to their parents by a vertical line that extends down from the equals sign. A sibling group is represented by a horizontal line that encompasses the group. Usually children are represented from left to right–oldest to youngest. Other conventions for these charts include darkening the symbol or drawing a diagonal line through the symbol to indicate that a person is deceased. A diagonal line may be drawn through the equals sign if a marriage has ended.

The image above shows a diagram of three generations of a typical bilateral (two sides) kinship group, focused on parents and children, with aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and grandchildren. Note that everyone in the diagram is related to everyone else in the

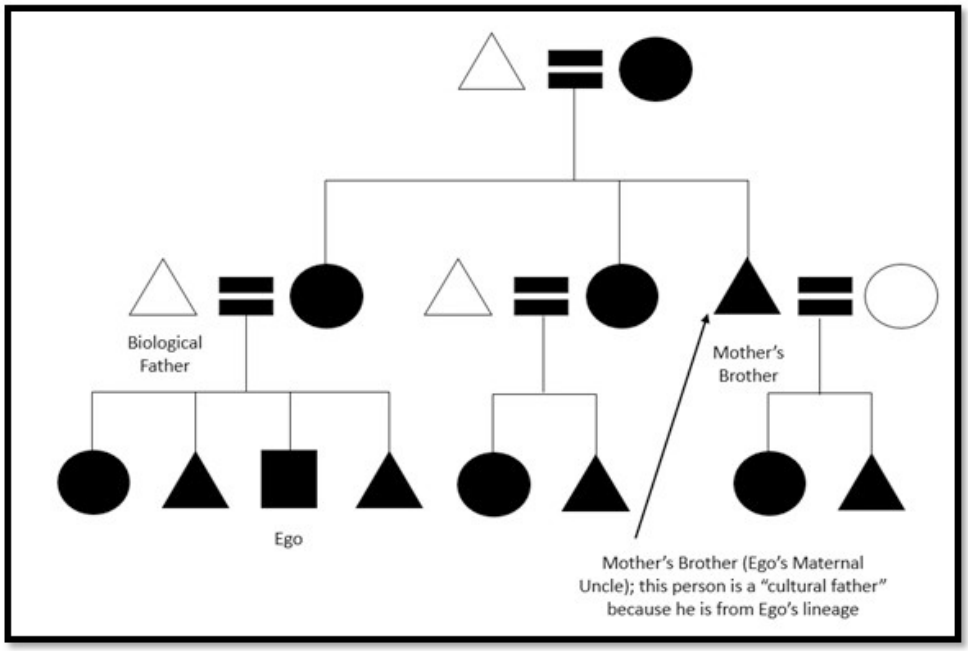
diagram, even though they may not interact on a regular basis. The group could potentially be very large, and everyone related through blood, marriage, or adoption is included.

The next two kinship chart show how the descent group changes in unilineal kinship systems like a patrilineal system (father's line) or a matrilineal system (mother's line). The roles of the family members in relationship to one another are also likely to be different because descent is based on lineage: descent from a common ancestor. In a patrilineal system, children are always members of their father's lineage group. In a matrilineal system, children are always members of their mother's lineage group. In both cases, individuals remain a part of their birth lineage throughout their lives, even after marriage. Typically, people must marry someone outside their own lineage. In the charts below, the shaded symbols represent people who are in the same lineage. The unshaded symbols represent people who have married into the lineage.

In general, bilateral kinship is more focused on individuals rather than a single lineage of ancestors as seen in unlineal descent. Each person in a bilateral system has a slightly different group of relatives. For example, my brother's relatives through marriage (his in-laws) are included in his kinship group, but are not included in mine. His wife's siblings and children are also included in his group, but not in mine. If we were in a patrilineal or matrilineal system, my brother and I would largely share the same group of relatives.



This kinship chart shows a patrilineal household with Ego in father's lineage



This kinship chart shows a matrilineal household with Ego in mother's lineage.

Matrilineages and patrilineages are not just mirror images of each other. They create groups that behave somewhat differently. Contrary to some popular ideas, matrilineages are not matriarchal. The terms "matriarchy" and "patriarchy" refer to the power structure in a society. In a patriarchal society, men have more authority and the ability to make more decisions than do women. A father may have the right to make certain decisions for his wife or wives, and for his children, or any other dependents. In matrilineal societies, men usually still have greater power, but women may be subject more to the power of their brothers or uncles (relatives through their mother's side of the family) rather than their fathers.

Among the matrilineal Hopi, for example, a mothers' brother is more likely to be a figure of authority than a father. The mother's brothers have important roles in the lives of their sisters' children. These roles include ceremonial obligations and the responsibility to teach the skills that are associated with men and men's activities. Men are the keepers of important ritual knowledge so while women are respected, men are still likely to hold more authority.

The Nayar of southern India offer an interesting example of gender roles in a matrilineal society. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, men and women did not live together after marriage because the husbands, who were not part of the matrilineage, were not considered relatives. Women lived for their entire lives in extended family homes with their mothers and siblings. The male siblings in the household had the social role of father and were important father figures in the lives of their sisters' children. The biological fathers of the children had only a limited role in their lives. Instead, these men were busy raising their own sisters' children. Despite the matrilineal focus of the household, Nayar communities were not matriarchies. The position of power in the household was held by an elder male, often the oldest male sibling.

The consequences of this kind of system are intriguing. Men did not have strong ties to their biological offspring. Marriages were fluid and men and women could have more than one spouse, but

the children always remained with their mothers. [7] Cross-culturally it does seem to be the case that in matrilineal societies women tend to have more freedom to make decisions about to sex and marriage. Children are members of their mother's kinship group, whether the mother is married or not, so there is often less concern about the social legitimacy of children or fatherhood.

Some anthropologists have suggested that marriages are less stable in matrilineal societies than in patrilineal ones, but this varies as well. Among the matrilineal Iroquois, for example, women owned the longhouses. Men moved into their wives' family houses at marriage. If a woman wanted to divorce her husband, she could simply put his belongings outside. In that society, however, men and women also spent significant time apart. Men were hunters and warriors, often away from the home. Women were the farmers and tended to the home. This, as much as matrilineality, could have contributed to less formality or disapproval of divorce. There was no concern about the division of property. The longhouse belonged to the mother's family, and children belonged to their mother's clan. Men would always have a home with their sisters and mother, in their own matrilineal longhouse.[9]

Kinship charts can be useful when doing field research and particularly helpful when documenting changes in families over time. In my own field research, it was easy to document changes that occurred in a relatively short time, likely linked to urbanization, such as changes in family size, in prevalence of divorce, and in increased numbers of unmarried adults. These patterns had emerged in the surveys and interviews I conducted, but they jumped

7. [8]
8. [4]
9. [10]
10. [5]

off the pages when I reviewed the kinship charts. Creating kinship charts was a very helpful technique in my field research.

KINSHIP TERMS

Another way to compare ideas about family across cultures is to categorize them based on kinship terminology: the terms used in a language to describe relatives. George Murdock was one of the first anthropologists to undertake this kind of comparison and he suggested that the kinship systems of the world could be placed in six categories based on the kinds of words a society used to describe relatives.[11] In some kinship systems, brothers, sisters, and all first cousins call each other brother and sister. In such a system, not only one's biological father, but all one's father's brothers would be called "father," and all of one's mother's sisters, along with one's biological mother, would be called "mother." Murdock and subsequent anthropologists refer to this as the Hawaiian system because it was found historically in Hawaii. In Hawaiian kinship terminology there are a smaller number of kinship terms and they tend to reflect generation and gender while merging nuclear families into a larger grouping. In other words, you, your brothers and sisters, and cousins would all be called "child" by your parents and your aunts and uncles.

Other systems are more complicated with different terms for father's elder brother, younger brother, grandparents on either side and so on. Each pattern was named for a cultural group in which this pattern was found. The system that most Americans follow is referred to as the Eskimo system, a name that comes from the old

11. [12]

12. [6]

way of referring to the Inuit, an indigenous people of the Arctic (bilateral descent). Placing cultures into categories based on kinship terminology is no longer a primary focus of anthropological studies of kinship. Differences in kinship terminology do provide insight into differences in the way people think about families and the roles people play within them.

Sometimes the differences in categorizing relatives and in terminology reflect patrilineal and matrilineal systems of descent. For example, in a patrilineal system, your father's brothers are members of your lineage or clan; your mother's brothers do not belong to the same lineage or clan and may or may not be counted as relatives. If they are counted, they likely are called something different from what you would call your father's brother. Similar differences would be present in a matrilineal society.

An Example from Croatia

In many U.S. families, any brother of your mother or father is called "uncle." In other kinship systems, however, some uncles and aunts count as members of the family and others do not. In Croatia, which was historically a patrilineal society, all uncles are recognized by their nephews and nieces regardless of whether they are brothers of the mother or the father. But, the uncle is called by a specific name that depends on which side of the family he is on; different roles are associated with different types of uncles.

A child born into a traditional Croatian family will call his aunts and uncles *stric* and *strina* if they are his father's brothers and their wives. He will call his mother's brothers and their wives *ujak* and *ujna*. The words *tetka* or *tetak* can be used to refer to anyone who is a sister of either of his parents or a husband of any of his parents' sisters. The third category, *tetka* or *tetak*, has no reference to "side" of the family; all are either *tetka* or *tetak*.

These terms are not simply words. They reflect ideas about

belonging and include expectations of behavior. Because of the patrilineage, individuals are more likely to live with their father's extended family and more likely to inherit from their father's family, but mothers and children are very close. Fathers are perceived as authority figures and are owed deference and respect. A father's brother is also an authority figure. Mothers, however, are supposed to be nurturing and a mother's brother is regarded as having a mother-like role. This is someone who spoils his sister's children in ways he may not spoil his own. A young person may turn to a maternal uncle, or mother's brother in a difficult situation and expects that a maternal uncle will help him and maintain confidentiality. These concepts are so much a part of the culture that one may refer to a more distant relative or an adult friend as a "mother's brother" if that person plays this kind of nurturing role in one's life. These terms harken back to an earlier agricultural society in which a typical family, household, and economic unit was a joint patrilineal and extended family. Children saw their maternal uncles less frequently, usually only on special occasions. Because brothers are also supposed to be very fond of sisters and protective of them, those additional associations are attached to the roles of maternal uncles. Both father's sisters and mother's sisters move to their own husbands' houses at marriage and are seen even less often. This probably reflects the more generic, blended term for aunts and uncles in both these categories.[13]

Similar differences are found in Croatian names for other relatives. Side of the family is important, at least for close relatives. Married couples have different names for in-laws if the in-law is a husband's parent or a wife's parent. Becoming the mother of a married son is higher in social status than becoming the mother of a married daughter. A man's mother gains authority over a new daughter-in-law, who usually leaves her own family to live with her

13. [14]

14. [7]

husband's family and work side by side with her mother-in-law in a house.

An Example from China

In traditional Chinese society, families distinguished terminologically between mother's side and father's side with different names for grandparents as well as aunts, uncles, and in-laws. Siblings used terms that distinguished between siblings by gender, as we do in English with "brother" and "sister," but also had terms to distinguish between older and younger siblings. Intriguingly, however, the Chinese word for "he/she/it" is a single term, *ta* with no reference to gender or age. The traditional Chinese family was an extended patrilineal family, with women moving into the husband's family household. In most regions, typically brothers stayed together in adulthood. Children grew up knowing their fathers' families, but not their mothers' families. Some Chinese families still live this way, but urbanization and changes in housing and economic livelihood have made large extended families increasingly less practical.

A Navajo Example

In Navajo (or *Diné*) society, children are "born for" their father's families but "born to" their mother's families, the clan to which they belong primarily. The term clan refers to a group of people who have a general notion of common descent that is not attached to a specific ancestor. Some clans trace their common ancestry to a common mythological ancestor. Because clan membership is so important to identity and to social expectations in Navajo culture, when people meet they exchange clan information first to find out

how they stand in relationship to each other. People are expected to marry outside the clans of their mothers or fathers. Individuals have responsibilities to both sides of the family, but especially to the matrilineal clan. Clans are so large that people may not know clan every individual member, and may not even live in the same vicinity as all clan members, but rights and obligations to any clan members remain strong in people's thinking and in practical behavior. I recently had the experience at the community college where I work in Central Arizona of hearing a young Navajo woman introduce herself in a public setting. She began her address in Navajo, and then translated. Her introduction included reference to her clan memberships, and she concluded by saying that these clan ties are part of what makes her a Navajo woman.

An Example from the United States

In many cases, cultures assign "ownership" of a child, or responsibilities for that child anyway, to some person or group other than the mother. In the United States, if one were to question people about who is in their families, they would probably start by naming both their parents, though increasingly single parent families are the norm. Typically, however, children consider themselves equally related to a mother and a father even if one or both are absent from their life. This makes sense because most American families organize themselves according to the principles of bilateral descent, as discussed above, and do not show a preference for one side of their family or the other. So, on further inquiry, we might discover that there are siblings (distinguished with different words by gender, but not birth order), and grandparents on either side of the family who count as family or extended family. Aunts, uncles, and cousins, along with in-laws, round out the typical list of U.S. family members. It is not uncommon for individuals to know more about one side of the

family than the other, but given the nature of bilateral descent the idea that people on each side of the family are equally "related" is generally accepted. The notion of bilateral descent is built into legal understandings of family rights and responsibilities in the United States. In a divorce in most states, for example, parents are likely to share time somewhat equally with a minor child and to have joint decision-making and financial responsibility for that child's needs as part of a parental agreement, unless one parent is unable or unwilling to participate as an equal.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

In a basic biological sense, women give birth and the minimal family unit in most, though not all societies, is mother and child. Cultures elaborate that basic relationship and build on it to create units that are culturally considered central to social life. Families grow through the birth or adoption of children and through new adult relationships often recognized as marriage. In our own society, it is only culturally acceptable to be married to one spouse at a time though we may practice what is sometimes called serial monogamy, or, marriage to a succession of spouses one after the other. This is reinforced by religious systems, and more importantly in U.S. society, by law. Plural marriages are not allowed; they are illegal although they do exist because they are encouraged under some religions or ideologies. In the United States, couples are legally allowed to divorce and remarry, but not all religions cultural groups support this practice.

When anthropologists talk of family structures, we distinguish among several standard family types any of which can be the typical or preferred family unit in a culture. First is the nuclear family: parents who are in a culturally-recognized relationship, such as marriage, along with their minor or dependent children. This family type is also known as a conjugal family. A non-conjugal nuclear

family might be a single parent with dependent children, because of the death of one spouse or divorce or because a marriage never occurred. Next is the extended family: a family of at least three-generations sharing a household. A stem family is a version of an extended family that includes an older couple and one of their adult children with a spouse (or spouses) and children. In situations where one child in a family is designated to inherit, it is more likely that only the inheriting child will remain with the parents when he or she becomes an adult and marries. While this is often an oldest male, it is sometimes a different child. In Burma or Myanmar for example, the youngest daughter was considered the ideal caretaker of elderly parents, and was generally designated to inherit.[15] The other children will "marry out" or find other means to support themselves.

A joint family is a very large extended family that includes multiple generations. Adult children of one gender, often the males, remain in the household with their spouses and children and they have collective rights to family property. Unmarried adult children of both genders may also remain in the family group. For example, a household could include a set of grandparents, all of their adult sons with their wives and children, and unmarried adult daughters. A joint family in rare cases could have dozens of people, such as the traditional *zadruga* of Croatia, discussed in greater detail below.

Polygamous families are based on plural marriages in which there are multiple wives or, in rarer cases, multiple husbands. These families may live in nuclear or extended family households and they may or may not be close to each other spatially (see discussion of households below). The terms step family or blended family are used to describe families that develop when adults who have been widowed or divorced marry again and bring children from previous partnerships together. These families are common in many

15. [16]

16. [8]

countries with high divorce rates. A wonderful fictional example was *The Brady Bunch* of 1970s television.

Who Can You Marry?

Cultural expectations define appropriate potential marriage partners. Cultural rules emphasizing the need to marry within a cultural group are known as endogamy. People are sometimes expected to marry within religious communities, to marry someone who is ethnically or racially similar or who comes from a similar economic or educational background. These are endogamous marriages: marriages within a group. Cultural expectations for marriage outside a particular group are called exogamy. Many cultures require that individuals marry only outside their own kinship groups, for instance. In the United States laws prevent marriage between close relatives such as first cousins. There was a time in the not so distant past, however, when it was culturally preferred for Europeans, and Euro-Americans to marry first cousins. Royalty and aristocrats were known to betroth their children to relatives, often cousins. Charles Darwin, who was British, married his first cousin Emma. This was often done to keep property and wealth in the family.

In some societies, however, a cousin might be a preferred marriage partner. In some Middle Eastern societies, patrilateral cousin marriage – marrying a male or female cousin on your father's side – is preferred. Some cultures prohibit marriage with a cousin who is in your lineage but, prefer that you marry a cousin who is not in your lineage. For example, if you live in a society that traces kinship patrilineally, cousins from your father's brothers or sisters would be forbidden as marriage partners, but cousins from your mother's brothers or sisters might be considered excellent marriage partners.

Arranged marriages were typical in many cultures around the

world in the past including in the United States. Marriages are arranged by families for many reasons: because the families have something in common, for financial reasons, to match people with others from the "correct" social, economic or religious group, and for many other reasons. In India today, some people practice a kind of modified arranged marriage practice that allows the potential spouses to meet and spend time together before agreeing to a match. The meeting may take place through a mutual friend, a family member, community matchmaker, or even a Marriage Meet even in which members of the same community (caste) are invited to gather (see Figure 5). Although arranged marriages still exist in urban cities such as Mumbai, love matches are increasingly common. In general, as long as the social requirements are met, love matches may be accepted by the families involved.



This advertisement for "Marriage Meet" in Mumbai, India welcomes "boys" and "girls" from the community to participate in a Marriage Meet, in which young people can mingle with and get to know potential spouses in a fun atmosphere. Photo used with permission of Laura Tubelle de González.

Polygamy refers to any marriage in which there are multiple partners. There are two kinds of polygamy: polygyny and polyandry. Polygyny refers to marriages in which there is one husband and multiple wives. In some societies that practice polygyny, the preference is for sororal polygyny, or the marriage of one man to several sisters. In such cases, it is sometimes believed that sisters will get along better as co-wives. Polyandry describes

marriages with one wife and multiple husbands. As with polygyny, fraternal polyandryis common and involves the marriage of a woman to a group of brothers.

In some cultures, if a man's wife dies, especially if he has no children, or has young children, it is thought to be best for him to marry one of his deceased wife's sisters. A sister, it is believed, is a reasonable substitution for the lost wife and likely a more loving mother to any children left behind. This practice might also prevent the need to return property exchanged at marriage, such as dowry (payments made to the groom's family before marriage), or bridewealth(payments made to the bride's family before marriage). The practice of a man marrying the sister of his deceased wife is called sororate marriage. In the case of a husband's death, some societies prefer that a woman marry one of her husband's brothers, and in some cases this might be preferred even if he already has a wife. This practice is called levirate marriage.

CONCLUSION

The institutions of the family and marriage are found in all societies and are part of cultural understandings of the way the world should work. In all cultures there are variations that are acceptable as well as situations in which people cannot quite meet the ideal. How people construct families varies greatly from one society to another, but there are patterns across cultures that are linked to economics, religion, and other cultural and environmental factors. The study of families and marriage is an important part of anthropology because family and household groups play a central role in defining relationships between people and making society function. While there is nothing in biology that dictates that a family group be organized in a particular way, our cultural expectations leads to ideas about families that seem "natural" to us. As cultures

change over time, ideas about family also adapt to new circumstances.

14. Race, Ethnicity, and Official Identity

"Race and Ethnicity"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Justin D. García (jgarcia@millersville.edu)

IS ANTHROPOLOGY THE "SCIENCE OF RACE?"

Anthropology was sometimes referred to as the "science of race" during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when physical anthropologists sought a biological basis for categorizing humans into racial types.[1] Since World War II, important research by anthropologists has revealed that racial categories are socially and culturally defined concepts and that racial labels and their

1. [2]
2. [1]

definitions vary widely around the world. In other words, different countries have different racial categories, and different ways of classifying their citizens into these categories.[3] At the same time, significant genetic studies conducted by physical anthropologists since the 1970s have revealed that biologically distinct human races do not exist. Certainly, humans vary in terms of physical and genetic characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape, but those variations cannot be used as criteria to biologically classify racial groups with scientific accuracy. Let us turn our attention to understanding why humans cannot be scientifically divided into biologically distinct races.

Race: A Discredited Concept in Human Biology

Physical anthropologists have identified several important concepts regarding the true nature of humans' physical, genetic, and biological variation that have discredited race as a biological concept. Race is a complicated, often emotionally charged topic, leading many people to rely on their personal opinions and hearsay when drawing conclusions about people who are different from them.

Before explaining why distinct biological races do not exist among humans, I must point out that one of the biggest reasons so many people continue to believe in the existence of biological human races is that the idea has been intensively reified in literature, the media, and culture for more than three hundred years. Reification refers to the process in which an inaccurate concept or idea is so heavily promoted and circulated among people that it begins to take on a life of its own. Over centuries, the notion of biological human

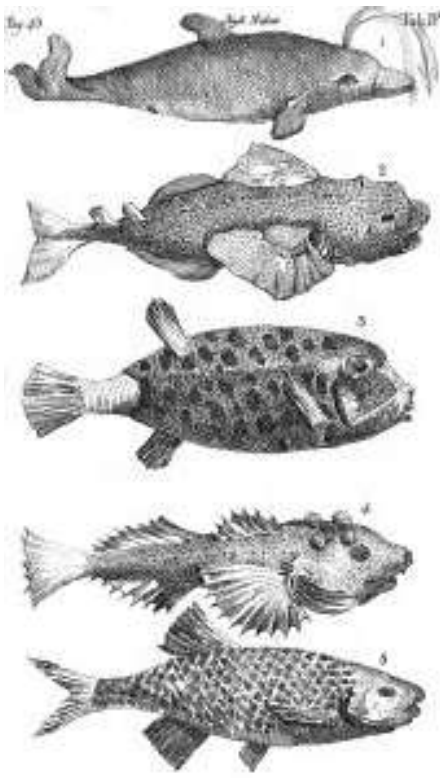
3. [4]

4. [2]

races became ingrained—unquestioned, accepted, and regarded as a concrete "truth." Studies of human physical and cultural variation from a scientific and anthropological perspective have allowed us to move beyond reified thinking and toward an improved understanding of the true complexity of human diversity.

The reification of race has a long history. Especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, philosophers and scholars attempted to identify various human races. They perceived "races" as specific divisions of humans who shared certain physical and biological features that distinguished them from other groups of humans. This historic notion of race may seem clear-cut and innocent enough, but it quickly led to problems as social theorists attempted to classify people by race. One of the most basic difficulties was the actual number of human races: how many were there, who were they, and what grounds distinguished them? Despite more than three centuries of such effort, no clear-cut scientific consensus was established for a precise number of human races.

One of the earliest and most influential attempts at producing a racial classification system came from Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus, who argued in *Systema Naturae* (1735) for the existence of four human races: *Americanus* (Native American / American Indian), *Europaeus* (European), *Asiaticus* (East Asian), and *Africanus* (African). These categories correspond with common racial labels used in the United States for census and demographic purposes today. However, in 1795, German physician and anthropologist Johann Blumenbach suggested that there were five races, which he labeled as *Caucasian* (white), *Mongolian* (yellow or East Asian), *Ethiopian* (black or African), *American* (red or American Indian), *Malayan* (brown or Pacific Islander). Importantly, Blumenbach listed the races in this exact order, which he believed reflected their natural historical descent from the "primeval" Caucasian original to "extreme varieties."[5] Although he was a



In Systema Naturae, Carolus Linnaeus attempted to create a taxonomy for all living things, including people.

5. [6]

6. [4]

committed abolitionist, Blumenbach nevertheless felt that his "Caucasian" race (named after the Caucasus Mountains of Central Asia, where he believed humans had originated) represented the original variety of humankind from which the other races had degenerated.

By the early twentieth century, many social philosophers and scholars had accepted the idea of three human races: the so-called *Caucasoid*, *Negroid*, and *Mongoloid* groups that corresponded with regions of Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, and East Asia, respectively. However, the three-race theory faced serious criticism given that numerous peoples from several geographic regions were omitted from the classification, including Australian Aborigines, Asian Indians, American Indians, and inhabitants of the South Pacific Islands. Those groups could not be easily pigeonholed into racial categories regardless of how loosely the categories were defined. Australian Aborigines, for example, often have dark complexions (a trait they appeared to share with Africans) but reddish or blondish hair (a trait shared with northern Europeans). Likewise, many Indians living on the Asian subcontinent have complexions that are as dark or darker than those of many Africans and African Americans. Because of these seeming contradictions, some academics began to argue in favor of larger numbers of human races—five, nine, twenty, sixty, and more.[7]

During the 1920s and 1930s, some scholars asserted that Europeans were comprised of more than one "white" or "Caucasian" race: *Nordic*, *Alpine*, and *Mediterranean* (named for the geographic regions of Europe from which they descended). These European races, they alleged, exhibited obvious physical traits that distinguished them from one another and thus served as racial boundaries. For example, "Nordics" were said to consist of peoples of Northern Europe—Scandinavia, the British Isles, and Northern

7. [8]

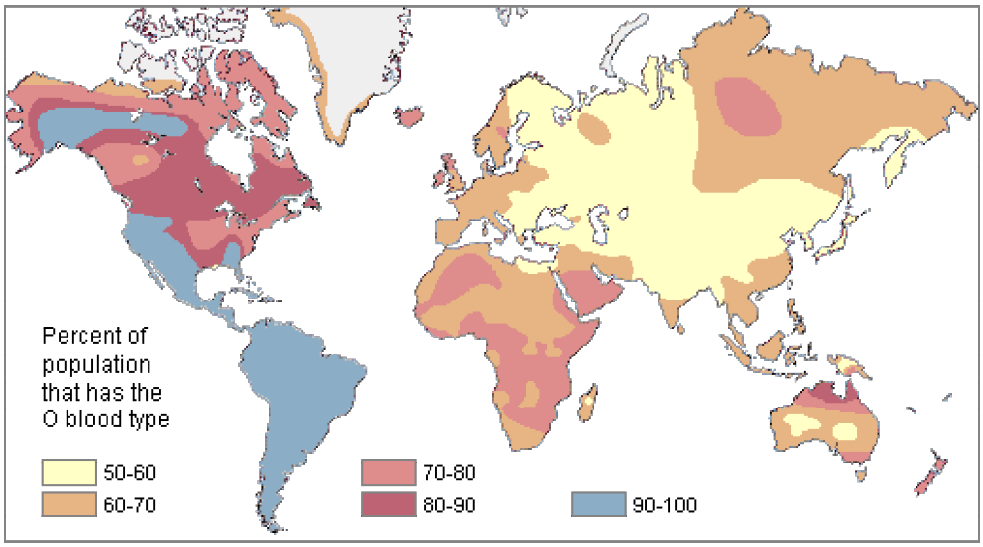
8. [5]

Germany— while "Alpines" came from the Alps Mountains of Central Europe and included French, Swiss, Northern Italians, and Southern Germans. People from southern Europe—including Portuguese, Spanish, Southern Italians, Sicilians, Greeks, and Albanians—comprised the "Mediterranean" race. Most Americans today would find this racial classification system bizarre, but its proponents argued for it on the basis that one would observe striking physical differences between a Swede or Norwegian and a Sicilian. Similar efforts were made to "carve up" the populations of Africa and Asia into geographically local, specific races.[9]

The fundamental point here is that any effort to classify human populations into racial categories is inherently arbitrary and subjective rather than scientific and objective. These racial classification schemes simply reflected their proponents' desires to "slice the pie" of human physical variation according to the particular trait(s) they preferred to establish as the major, defining criteria of their classification system. Racial labels clearly attempt to identify and describe *something*. So why do these racial labels not accurately describe human physical and biological variation? To understand why, we must keep in mind that racial labels are distinct, discrete categories while human physical and biological variations (such as skin color, hair color and texture, eye color, height, nose shape, and distribution of blood types) are *continuous* rather than discrete. Physical anthropologists use the term cline to refer to differences in the traits that occur in populations across a geographical area. In a cline, a trait may be more common in one geographical area than another, but the variation is gradual and continuous with no sharp breaks.

9. [10]

10. [6]



The global distribution of Type O blood reflects a clinal pattern.

Physical anthropologists have also found that there are no specific genetic traits that are exclusive to a "racial" group. For the concept of human races to have biological significance, an analysis of multiple genetic traits would have to consistently produce the same racial classifications. In other words, a racial classification scheme for skin color would also have to reflect classifications by blood type, hair texture, eye shape, lactose intolerance, and other traits often mistakenly assumed to be "racial" characteristics. An analysis based on any one of those characteristics individually would produce a unique set of racial categories because variations in human physical and genetic are nonconcordant. Each trait is inherited independently, not "bundled together" with other traits and inherited as a package. There is no correlation between skin color and other characteristics such as blood type and lactose intolerance.

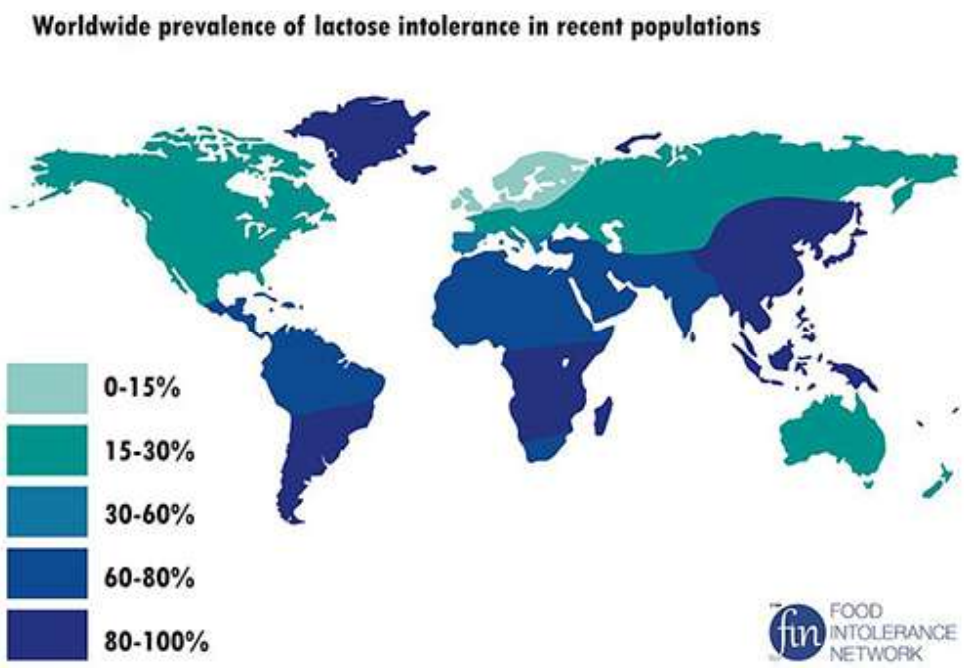
A prominent example of nonconcordance is sickle-cell anemia, which people often mistakenly think of as a disease that only affects Africans, African Americans, and "black" persons. In fact, the sickle-cell allele (the version of the gene that causes sickle-cell anemia when a person inherits two copies) is relatively common among

people whose ancestors are from regions where a certain strain of malaria, *plasmodium falciparum*, is prevalent, namely Central and Western Africa and parts of Mediterranean Europe, the Arabian peninsula, and India. The sickle-cell trait thus is not exclusively African or "black." The erroneous perceptions are relatedly primarily to the fact that the ancestors of U.S. African Americans came predominantly from Western Africa, where the sickle-cell gene is prevalent, and are therefore more recognizable than populations of other ancestries and regions where the sickle-cell gene is common, such as southern Europe and Arabia.[11]

Another trait commonly mistaken as defining race is the epicanthic eye fold typically associated with people of East Asian ancestry. The epicanthic eye fold at the outer corner of the eyelid produces the eye shape that people in the United States typically associate with people from China and Japan, but is also common in people from Central Asia, parts of Eastern Europe and Scandinavia, some American Indian groups, and the Khoi San of southern Africa.

11. [12]

12. [9]



The ability to digest the lactose found in dairy products is more common in some populations than others.

In college, I took a course titled "Nutrition" because I thought it would be an easy way to boost my grade point average. The professor of the class, an authoritarian man in his late 60s or early 70s, routinely declared that "Asians can't drink milk!" When this assertion was challenged by various students, including a woman who claimed that her best friend was Korean and drank milk and ate ice cream all the time, the professor only became more strident, doubling down on his dairy diatribe and defiantly vowing that he would not "ignore the facts" for "purposes of political correctness." However, it is scientific accuracy, not political correctness, we should be concerned about, and lactose tolerance is a complex topic. Lactose is a sugar that is naturally present in milk and dairy products, and an enzyme, lactase, breaks it down into two simpler sugars that can be digested by the body. Ordinarily, humans (and other mammals) stop producing lactase after infancy, and approximately 75 percent of humans are thus lactose intolerant and

cannot naturally digest milk. Lactose intolerance is a natural, normal condition. However, some people continue to produce lactase into adulthood and can naturally digest milk and dairy products. This lactose persistence developed through natural selection, primarily among people in regions that had long histories of dairy farming (including the Middle East, Northern Europe, Eastern Europe, East Africa, and Northern India). In other areas and for some groups of people, dairy products were introduced relatively recently (such as East Asia, Southern Europe, and Western and Southern Africa and among Australian Aborigines and American Indians) and lactose persistence has not developed yet.[13]

The idea of biological human races emphasizes differences, both real and perceived, *between* groups and ignores or overlooks differences *within* groups. The biological differences between "whites" and "blacks" and between "blacks" and "Asians" are assumed to be greater than the biological differences among "whites" and among "blacks." The opposite is actually true; the overwhelming majority of genetic diversity in humans (88–92 percent) is found within people who live on the same continent.[15] Also, keep in mind that human beings are one of the most genetically similar of all species. There is nearly six times more genetic variation among white-tailed deer in the southern United States than in all humans! Consider our closest living relative, the chimpanzee. Chimpanzees' natural habitat is confined to central Africa and parts of western Africa, yet four genetically distinct groups occupy those regions and they are far more genetically distinct than humans who live on different continents. That humans exhibit such a low level of genetic variation compared to other

13. [14]
14. [10]
15. [16]
16. [11]

species reflects the fact that we are a relatively recent species; modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) first appeared in East Africa just under 200,000 years ago.[17]

Physical anthropologists today analyze human biological variation by examining specific genetic traits to understand how those traits originated and evolved over time and why some genetic traits are more common in certain populations. Since much of our biological diversity occurs mostly within (rather than between) continental regions once believed to be the homelands of distinct races, the concept of race is meaningless in any study of human biology. Franz Boas, considered the father of modern U.S. anthropology, was the first prominent anthropologist to challenge racial thinking directly during the early twentieth century. A professor of anthropology at Columbia University in New York City and a Jewish immigrant from Germany, Boas established anthropology in the United States as a four-field academic discipline consisting of archaeology, physical/biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, and linguistics. His approach challenged conventional thinking at the time that humans could be separated into biological races endowed with unique intellectual, moral, and physical abilities.

In one of his most famous studies, Boas challenged craniometrics, in which the size and shape of skulls of various groups were measured as a way of assigning relative intelligence and moral behavior. Boas noted that the size and shape of the skull were not fixed characteristics within groups and were instead influenced by the environment. Children born in the United States to parents of various immigrant groups, for example, had slightly different average skull shapes than children born and raised in the homelands of those immigrant groups. The differences reflected relative access to nutrition and other socio-economic dimensions. In his famous 1909 essay "Race Problems in America," Boas challenged the

17. [18]

18. [12]

commonly held idea that immigrants to the United States from Italy, Poland, Russia, Greece, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and other southern and eastern European nations were a threat to America's "racial purity." He pointed out that the British, Germans, and Scandinavians (popularly believed at the time to be the "true white" heritages that gave the United States its superior qualities) were not themselves "racially pure." Instead, many different tribal and cultural groups had intermixed over the centuries. [13] In fact, Boas asserted, the notion of "racial purity" was utter nonsense. As present-day anthropologist Jonathan Marks (1994) noted, "You may group humans into a small number of races if you want to, but you are denied biology as a support for it."[19]

Race, Sovereignty, and Civil Rights: Understanding the Cherokee Freedmen Controversy

from *Cultural Anthropology, 29(3)*

by Circe Sturm (2014)

Despite a treaty in 1866 between the Cherokee Nation and the federal government granting them full tribal citizenship, Cherokee Freedmen—the descendants of African American slaves to the Cherokee, as well as of children born from unions between African Americans and Cherokee tribal members—continue to be one of the most marginalized communities within Indian Country. Any time Freedmen have sought the full rights and benefits given other Cherokee citizens, they have

19. [20]

20. [13]

encountered intense opposition, including a 2007 vote that effectively ousted them from the tribe. The debates surrounding this recent decision provide an excellent case study for exploring the intersections of race and sovereignty.

They spoke Cherokee, lived among Cherokees, and shared Cherokee ways of life, yet they and their descendants have rarely been accepted as legitimate Cherokee people. This is the long-standing situation of the Cherokee Freedmen, the descendants of African Cherokee slaves once held by Cherokee slave owners.[1] Despite a treaty in 1866 between the Cherokee Nation and the U.S. government granting them full tribal citizenship (*Treaty with the Cherokee*, 1866, 14 Stat. 799), Cherokee Freedmen continue to be one of the most marginalized communities within Native North America. In a series of court cases during the past 150 years, Cherokee Freedmen in Oklahoma have sought full tribal citizenship within the Cherokee Nation, something they believe is their legal and moral right. These rights have been denied for many reasons, often because most Freedmen lack a Certificate Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) and are assumed, as a class, to have no lineal blood ties to the Cherokee Nation.[2] Yet in fact many Freedmen with Cherokee ancestry cannot obtain a CDIB because they descend from black Cherokees who were racially misclassified on a tribal census known as the Dawes Rolls, created at the turn of the twentieth century for the purpose of land allotment. At that time, most African Cherokee individuals were placed on the Freedmen rolls of the Cherokee census, which are now

interpreted as the "Black" or non-Indian rolls, rather than the "Cherokee by Blood" rolls.

Whether or not they have Cherokee ancestry, Cherokee Freedmen have encountered intense opposition whenever they have sought the full rights and benefits given other tribal citizens. That opposition has usually played out in federal and tribal courts. More recently, however, in 2006 and 2007, opposition to Freedmen recognition took place on a wider scale than ever before: in public speeches, grassroots petitions, e-mail campaigns, and letters to the editor in the tribal newspaper. Cherokee citizens in Oklahoma publicly debated the status of Cherokee Freedmen because their principal chief, Chadwick Smith, had called for an unprecedented special election to change tribal citizenship requirements. The proposed change would amend the Cherokee constitution to specify that all Cherokee citizens had to descend from ancestors listed on the Dawes Rolls as Cherokees by blood. Because the Freedmen were enrolled in a separate category—on what amounted to a black citizen roll that did not specify any Cherokee blood quantum—the amendment would effectively deny the Cherokee Freedmen a place in the tribe once and for all.

The political controversy surrounding the special election provides an excellent case study for exploring the intersections of race and sovereignty. The ongoing story of the Cherokee Freedmen's struggle for political recognition reveals the tensions between two competing sets of rights claims—civil rights versus tribal sovereignty—that are often in conflict in Indian Country

in ways not yet fully explored. While civil rights apply to everyone equally and are understood to be largely about individual equality and full incorporation into the nation-state, tribal sovereignty concerns collective rights and some degree of political autonomy from the nation-state. Civil rights are also explicitly imagined as an antidote to racial discrimination, whereas sovereign rights are associated less with race and racism and more with the unique political status of indigenous peoples as citizens of domestic dependent nations. In fact, the uniqueness of the indigenous position is often foregrounded within Native American studies, where the rallying cry has long been "American Indian tribes are nations, not minorities" (Wilkins 2001, 33). The same holds true for federal Indian law, where "American Indian" has been repeatedly upheld as an explicitly political rather than racial category (see Rolnick 2011 on *Morton v. Mancari* 417 U.S. 535 [1974]; and Strong 2005 on *The Indian Child Welfare Act*, 25 U.S.C. § 1901–1963 [1978]).

In 1983, the Cherokee Tribal Council annotated the Cherokee National Code to specify that "tribal membership is derived only through proof of Cherokee blood based on the Final Rolls" (11 CNCA § 12). For the past three decades, the descendants of Cherokee Freedmen have argued in cases before federal and tribal courts that this decision violates not only the Treaty of 1866 but also the Cherokee Nation's own constitution, and that this relatively new blood requirement places an undue burden on Freedmen descendants. Even those with proof of Cherokee ancestry in other documents

cannot satisfy the requirements for tribal citizenship because their relatives were racially misclassified on the Dawes Rolls in the first place—meaning they were placed on the Freedmen rolls, rather than on the Cherokee by Blood rolls. Yet the decisions reached in nearly every case before the federal courts asserted that U.S. courts have no jurisdiction over the Cherokee Freedmen's citizenship status because it constitutes an internal tribal dispute and thus a matter of tribal sovereignty. The principle of sovereignty, as understood in U.S. federal Indian law, means that only the Cherokee Nation and its people can determine its own citizenry.

Concerns with racial integrity and Indian identity appear ironic, given the Cherokee Nation's long history of racial inclusiveness and its current enrollment policies requiring proof of lineal descent from a Dawes enrollee, rather than a specific Cherokee Indian blood quantum. Because no minimal degree of ancestry is required, current tribal citizens have CDIBs that range from "full-blood" Cherokee ancestry to "1/4096," a fact well known and sometimes controversial in Indian Country. Cherokee citizens are extremely diverse, and one would assume that the tribe's policy of lineal descent is meant to measure kinship and historical political association rather than racial identity. Yet that same policy also introduces some racial insecurity. Many Cherokees do conflate ancestry with race, partially because of their awareness that the broader public racializes their status as an indigenous nation. So, another concern is that the appearance of racial dilution may threaten their political recognition and eventually

their sovereignty. For many Cherokee, the logic of hypodescent, or the so-called one-drop rule, that overdetermines the social and racial classification of African descendants in the United States, creates a situation in which Cherokee Freedmen citizens threaten the Cherokee Nation's status as a tribe of Indians more than do Cherokee-white descendants or any other admixtures. Ironically, the same holds true even in cases where Cherokee Freedmen have greater degrees of Cherokee blood than other segments of the tribal population.

Not surprisingly, this highly racialized discourse outraged the Cherokee Freedmen, and they responded with their own information campaign. They argued that casting Cherokee national identity strictly in terms of blood or race ignored all other forms of Cherokee social and political belonging that had previously constituted Cherokee citizenship in the nation's long history. They pointed to the ways in which Freedmen had participated in the civic and social life of the Cherokee Nation, even as it seemed to grow increasingly hostile to their inclusion. As evidence, they named six Cherokee Freedmen leaders who had served on the Cherokee National Council; they described how they had continued to reside within the Cherokee Nation proper, primarily in its original Illinois, Muskogee, Tahlequah, and Cooweescoowee districts, the same areas in which Freedmen had once held elected political office, and how they had continued to participate in the newly reformed Cherokee national government in the early 1970s, even though few benefits were then available to

citizens with less than one-quarter of Cherokee blood (Feldhousen-Giles 2007, 189–90).

Though the Freedmen story is still unfolding, what can we learn from those conflicting articulations of race and sovereignty that took place in the Cherokee Nation in the years surrounding the special election? Some scholars and activists are quick to assert that indigenous identity and the sovereign rights attaching to that identity have nothing to do with race, but the case of the Cherokee Freedmen reveals a more complicated picture. First, let me make clear what I mean by sovereignty in this instance. Sovereignty signifies different things to different people, but it almost always refers to political autonomy and rights of self-determination. Yet many American Indians articulate a far more complex and even contradictory version of sovereignty. On the one hand, they describe an inherent form of sovereignty that coheres to them as autonomous, self-governing peoples akin to nations, one that continues to exist even when external entities fail to recognize them as such. On the other hand, they also describe a more interdependent form of sovereignty that stems from their government-to-government relationship with the United States (Sturm 2011, 151–52). As the anthropologist Jessica Cattelino (2008, 162–65) has pointed out, this second iteration of sovereignty requires astute political negotiation, economic reciprocity, and relations of interdependence with external powers. It also depends on various forms of external and internal recognition between federal, state, and tribal governments, as well as among tribal

citizens themselves. Herein lies the paradox of tribal sovereignty in the contemporary context: it is a form of political independence conditioned by interdependency. Tribal sovereignty, then, is so highly influenced by broader social and political forces that it cannot be innocent of racial dynamics, no matter what its most rigid defenders might suggest.

If Cherokee national sovereignty is defined primarily in political terms—as a unique status with an accompanying bundle of rights tied to specific lands, historical experiences, and laws—then it should not matter if Cherokees look, sound, and act like popular conceptions of non-Indians. Yet reality is infused with all sorts of unruly passions and inconvenient ideas, and if we carefully examine the case of the Cherokee Freedmen during this period, we can see how racial dynamics at affected the Cherokee Nation's attempts to exercise its sovereignty[7] at the federal, tribal, and local levels. Racial expectations and assumptions fundamentally shaped, and even delimited, the Cherokee Nation's ability to exercise its sovereignty. Such intersections between race and sovereignty should not be surprising, given that sovereignty is a specific discursive response to living under conditions of settler colonialism, a racialized project to its core. Though still a contested concept, settler colonialism usually describes a specifically Western European form of imperialist expansion that includes Canadian, U.S., and Australian versions as well. What distinguishes settler colonialism from franchise colonialism is that the key natural resource to be extracted is indigenous land.

Indigenous people can be used as a labor pool during the process of occupation and land dispossession, but the assumption is that they and their polities must eventually disappear. Moreover, as Patrick Wolfe (1999) has argued, once settlers claim indigenous lands as their own, they are here to stay. Settler colonialism is not some event that happened in the past, at a moment of invasion now over; rather, it constitutes an ongoing structural relationship in which settlers actively maintain forms of domination that enable them to continue to occupy indigenous territories in perpetuity. That oppressive relationship is justified via racialization, so that American Indian political collectives (meaning tribes as nations) are made to seem inferior to and "less civilized" than Western European nations.

RACE AS A SOCIAL CONCEPT

Just because the idea of distinct biological human races is not a valid scientific concept does not mean, and should not be interpreted as implying, that "there is no such thing as race" or that "race isn't real." Race is indeed real but it is a concept based on arbitrary social and cultural definitions rather than biology or science. Thus, racial categories such as "white" and "black" are as real as categories of "American" and "African." Many things in the world are real but are not biological. So, while race does not reflect biological characteristics, it reflects socially constructed concepts defined subjectively by societies to reflect notions of division that are perceived to be significant. Some sociologists and anthropologists

now use the term *social races* instead, seeking to emphasize their cultural and arbitrary roots.

Race is most accurately thought of as a socio-historical concept. Michael Omi and Howard Winant noted that "Racial categories and the meaning of race are given concrete expression by the specific social relations and historical context in which they are embedded."[21] In other words, racial labels ultimately reflect a society's social attitudes and cultural beliefs regarding notions of group differences. And since racial categories are culturally defined, they can vary from one society to another as well as change over time within a society. Omi and Winant referred to this as racial formation—"the process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories."[23]

Anthropologist Spotlight: Ellen Phyllis Hellman

John R. & Nolan D.

Anthropology 1000, Fall 2022

Ellen Phyllis Hellmann was a social anthropologist who was born and raised in the community of Johannesburg, South Africa. She was born on August 25, 1908, and passed away on November 6, 1982. Hellmann attended the University of Witwatersrand where she

21. [22]
22. [14]
23. [24]
24. [15]

met her husband Joseph Micheal Hellmann in 1932. In 1940 Ellen became the first woman to ever obtain a D.Phil. degree from the University of Witwatersrand which is known as a PhD in western world. While attending the University of Witwatersrand she met Agnes Winifred Hoernlé, a South African social anthropologist who is widely regarded as the "mother of social anthropology" in South African. She had a major impact on encouraging Ellen where to conduct her research, and why she should conduct this research. Ellen Hellmann lived 74 years and dedicated much of it to her research and fieldwork in a community of African slum dwellers at the center of Johannesburg. She lived through and saw some very tough living conditions through her research. She dedicated her life to her research and seeing these conditions promoted her to lead the South African Institute of Race and Relations for the years 1954-1956. This led her into politics, she was a very influential founding member of the liberal progressive party, she also encouraged South African Jews to stand up against inequality, and held office for the Institute for Internal Affairs in South Africa. Her findings from her research of the slum of Johannesburg was published in the book *Rooiyard: A Sociological Survey of an Urban Native Slum* (Hellmann, 1948). In a summary of the book done by Barbara Celarent it was discovered that Rooiyard consisted of 107 tiny 11 square foot rooms which housed 235 adults and 141 children (Celarent, 2012). The men of Rooiyard were mainly laborers and domestic servants while the women stayed back to raise the children and make illegal beer

(Celarent, 2012). Hellmann's work provided entry into a complex evolution of a society moving against the liberal trend. At the end of Celarent's article she states that "Rooiyard stands alone for its simple, forthright portrait of a group of slum dwellers making human lives under conditions of poverty, suspicion, and oppression" (Celarent, B. 2012, p.280). Throughout Hellmann's book the reader gains a clear view on how resilient the people living in poverty are and how they live in comparison to other groups of people. Ellen Hellmann also came out with the *Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa.*

References

Celarent, B. (2012). *Rooiyard: A sociological survey of an urban native slum yard by Ellen Hellmann*. American Journal of Sociology. Retrieved October 31, 2022, from https://home.uchicago.edu/aabbott/barbpapers/barbhell.pdf \

Abrams, L. Hellman, E. (1949). *Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa.* Oxford University Press. Retrieved November 14, 2022.

Hellman, E. (1948). *Rooiyard: A sociological survey of an urban native slum yard.* Oxford University Press. Retrieved November 14, 2022.

N.A. (2010). *Ellen Phyllis Hellman*. Ellen Phyllis Hellman | South African History Online. Retrieved October 31, 2022, from https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/ellen-phyllis-hellman

N.A (2008). *Remembering Agnes Winifred Hoernle*. Taylor & Francis. (n.d.). Retrieved November 14, 2022,

from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02533958708458421?journalCode=rsdy20

Pimstone, M. S. and M. (n.d.). *Ellen Phyllis Hellmann*. Jewish Women's Archive. Retrieved October 31, 2022, from https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/hellmann-ellen-phyllis

Yarros, V. S. (1970). *Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa. Ellen Hellmann: Social Service Review: Vol 23, no 4*. University of Chicago Press Journals. Retrieved November 3, 2022, from https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/637631

The process of racial formation is vividly illustrated by the idea of "whiteness" in the United States. Over the course of U.S. history, the concept of "whiteness" expanded to include various immigrant groups that once were targets of racist beliefs and discrimination. In the mid 1800s, for example, Irish Catholic immigrants faced intense hostility from America's Anglo-Protestant mainstream society, and anti-Irish politicians and journalists depicted the Irish as racially different and inferior. Newspaper cartoons frequently portrayed Irish Catholics in apelike fashion: overweight, knuckle dragging, and brutish. In the early twentieth century, Italian and Jewish immigrants were typically perceived as racially distinct from America's Anglo-Protestant "white" majority as well. They were said to belong to the inferior "Mediterranean" and "Jewish" races. Today, Irish, Italian, and Jewish Americans are fully considered "white," and many people find it hard to believe that they once were perceived otherwise. Racial categories as an aspect of culture are typically learned, internalized, and accepted without question or critical

thought in a process not so different from children learning their native language as they grow up.

Race is a socially constructed concept but it is not a trivial matter. On the contrary, one's race often has a dramatic impact on everyday life. In the United States, for example, people often use race—their personal understanding of race—to predict "who" a person is and "what" a person is like in terms of personality, behavior, and other qualities. Because of this tendency to characterize others and make assumptions about them, people can be uncomfortable or defensive when they mistake someone's background or cannot easily determine "what" someone is, as revealed in statements such as "You don't *look* black!" or "You *talk* like a white person. Such statements reveal fixed notions about "blackness" and "whiteness" and what members of each race will be like, reflecting their socially constructed and seemingly "common sense" understanding of the world.

Since the 1990s, scholars and anti-racism activists have discussed "white privilege" as a basic feature of race as a lived experience in the United States. Peggy McIntosh coined the term in a famous 1988 essay, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," in which she identified more than two dozen accumulated unearned benefits and advantages associated with being a "white" person in the United States. The benefits ranged from relatively minor things, such as knowing that "flesh color" Band-Aids would match her skin, to major determinants of life experiences and opportunities, such as being assured that she would never be asked to speak on behalf of her entire race, being able to curse and get angry in public without others assuming she was acting that way because of her race, and not having to teach her children that police officers and the general public would view them as suspicious or criminal because of their race.

White privilege has gained significant attention and is an important tool for understanding how race is often connected to everyday experiences and opportunities, but we must remember that no group is homogenous or monolithic. "White" persons

receive varying degrees of privilege and social advantage, and other important characteristics, such as social class, gender, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability, shape individuals' overall lives and how they experience society.

ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC GROUPS

The terms race and ethnicity are similar and there is a degree of overlap between them. The average person frequently uses the terms "race" and "ethnicity" interchangeably as synonyms and anthropologists also recognize that race and ethnicity are overlapping concepts. Both race and ethnic identity draw on an identification with others based on common ancestry and shared cultural traits.[25] As discussed earlier, a *race* is a social construction that defines groups of humans based on arbitrary physical and/or biological traits that are believed to distinguish them from other humans. An ethnic group, on the other hand, claims a distinct identity based on cultural characteristics and a shared ancestry that are believed to give its members a unique sense of peoplehood or heritage.

The cultural characteristics used to define ethnic groups vary; they include specific languages spoken, religions practiced, and distinct patterns of dress, diet, customs, holidays, and other markers of distinction. In some societies, ethnic groups are geographically concentrated in particular regions, as with the Kurds in Turkey and Iraq and the Basques in northern Spain.

Ethnicity refers to the degree to which a person identifies with and feels an attachment to a particular ethnic group. As a

25. [26]

26. [31]

component of a person's identity, ethnicity is a fluid, complex phenomenon that is highly variable. Many individuals view their ethnicity as an important element of their personal and social identity. Numerous psychological, social, and familial factors play a role in ethnicity, and ethnic identity is most accurately understood as a range or continuum populated by people at every point. One's sense of ethnicity can also fluctuate across time. Children of Korean immigrants living in an overwhelmingly white town, for example, may choose to self-identify simply as "American" during their middle school and high school years to fit in with their classmates and then choose to self-identify as "Korean," "Korean American," or "Asian American" in college or later in life as their social settings change or from a desire to connect more strongly with their family history and heritage.

In the United States, ethnic identity can sometimes be primarily or purely symbolic in nature. Sociologists and anthropologists use the term symbolic ethnicity to describe limited or occasional displays of ethnic pride and identity that are primarily *expressive*—for public display—rather than *instrumental* as a major component of their daily social lives. Symbolic ethnicity is pervasive in U.S. society; consider customs such as "Kiss Me, I'm Irish!" buttons and bumper stickers, Puerto Rican flag necklaces, decals of the Virgin of Guadalupe, replicas of the Aztec stone calendar, and tattoos of Celtic crosses or of the map of Italy in green, white, and red stripes.

In the United States, ethnic identity can sometimes be largely symbolic particularly for descendants of the various European immigrant groups who settled in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Regardless of whether their grandparents and great-grandparents migrated from Italy, Ireland, Germany, Poland, Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Greece, Scandinavia, or elsewhere, these third and fourth generation Americans likely do not speak their ancestors' languages and have lost most or all of the cultural customs and traditions their ancestors brought to the United States. A few traditions, such as favorite family recipes or distinct customs associated with the celebration of a holiday, that originated in their homelands may be retained by family members across generations, reinforcing a sense of ethnic heritage and identity today. More recent immigrants are likely to retain more of the language and cultural traditions of their countries of origin. Non-European immigrants groups from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean also experience significant linguistic and cultural losses over generations, but may also continue to self-identify with their ethnic backgrounds if they do not feel fully incorporated into U.S, society because they "stick out" physically from Euro-American society and experience prejudice and discrimination. Psychological, sociological, and anthropological studies have indicated that retaining a strong sense of ethnic pride and identification is common among ethnic minorities in the United States and other nations as a means of coping with and overcoming societal bigotry.



Many people in the United States cherish their ethnic identities and cultural traditions. This Hindu altar is from a home in San Diego, California.

Ethnic groups and ethnicity, like race, are socially constructed identities created at particular moments in history under particular

social conditions. The earliest views of ethnicity assumed that people had innate, unchanging ethnic identities and loyalties. In actuality, ethnic identities shift and are recreated over time and across societies. Anthropologists call this process ethnogenesis—gradual emergence of a new, distinct ethnic identity in response to changing social circumstances. For example, people whose ancestors came from what we know as Ireland may identify themselves as Irish Americans and generations of their ancestors as Irish, but at one time, people living in that part of the world identified themselves as Celtic.

In the United States, ethnogenesis has led to a number of new ethnic identities, including African American, Native American, American Indian, and Italian American. Slaves brought to America in the colonial period came primarily from Central and Western Africa and represented dozens of ethnic heritages, including Yoruba, Igbo, Akan, and Chamba, that had unique languages, religions, and cultures that were quickly lost because slaves were not permitted to speak their own languages or practice their customs and religions. Over time, a new unified identity emerged among their descendants. But that identity continues to evolve, as reflected by the transitions in the label used to identify it: from "colored" (early 1900s) to "Negro" (1930s–1960s) to "Black" (late 1960s to the present) and "African American" (1980s to the present).

CONCLUSION

Issues of race, racism, and ethnic relations remain among the most contentious social and political topics in the United States and throughout the world. Anthropology offers valuable information to the public regarding these issues, as anthropological knowledge encourages individuals to "think outside the box" about race and ethnicity. This "thinking outside the box" includes understanding that racial and ethnic categories are socially constructed rather

than natural, biological divisions of humankind. Physical anthropologists, who study human evolution, epidemiology, and genetics, are uniquely qualified to explain why distinct biological human races do not exist. Nevertheless, race and ethnicity – as social constructs – continue to be used as criteria for prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, and stereotypes well into the twenty-first century. Cultural anthropologists play a crucial role in informing the public how the concept of race originated, how racial categories have shifted over time and how race and ethnicity are constructed differently within various nations across the world. Understanding the complex nature of clines and continuous biological human variation, along with an awareness of the distinct ways in which race and ethnicity have been constructed in different nations, enables us to recognize racial and ethnic labels not as self-evident biological divisions of humans, but instead as socially created categories that vary cross-culturally.

15. The Biological Fallacy of Race

"The Biological Fallacy of Race"

from

AllegraLab

Hannah E. Marsh

I love my hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. I'm sure you've heard about Baltimore lately, with its sagging school system, serving a mainly African-American population; its yet again exploding minority murder rate; and the big one, the non-guilty verdicts for police officers involved in Freddie Gray's fatal arrest in April 2014. After Freddie Gray's death, Baltimore's long-brewing racial tension exploded in street protests (deemed riots by the media), where mainly African-American Baltimoreans called for respect, and greater equality. Through these events, cable news media dramatically portrayed a seemingly insurmountable tragedy: Baltimore has a Race Problem.

As a Baltimorean, I crinkled my brow and thought "what is a Race Problem?" It sounds harder to climb than Mount Everest, and harder to solve than any theoretical math equation. As a physical anthropologist, I answered my own question with "actually, race doesn't exist." If you said "Huh?" right there, let's do what America has been avoiding lately; let's talk about race.

> Biologically, race doesn't exist. Socially, we have a real problem with this ugly race thing that we think is biological.

When I say this, here is the big question that runs through the mind: I can see that people look different; aren't those different races? Great question! Let's start by analyzing what "a race" is, and what biological traits are wrapped into "a race." The main race categories in America are White, Black, Asian, Native American, and Other: two opposite colors; one continent; an ethnic group; and a catch-all category including billions of people and Chewbacca. These are not biologically defined groups. No human is biologically white or black. These are social terms; they have a social existence, and they have social power. Let's look at race in America to separate out this false thought that race is biological, first by taking a walk through our history, and then looking at our biology. For Baltimore.

Let us start by recognizing that America has a Race Problem. Here we are at the Race Problems Anonymous meeting: "Hi, my name's America, and I have a Race Problem." "Hi America," say the rest of the countries on Earth. In the spirit of these meetings, let's focus on our own problems, starting with the first time America took a drink of its race classification system. The United States was born with racial divisions in its blood, because we inherited it from our parents: European exploitation of Africans through slavery. Europeans brought their addiction for owning people to North America, and the colonies thrived on it. Simultaneously, the American colonies agitated for freedom from Great Britain's oppression, culminating in the Declaration of Independence that stated "…all men are created equal, …with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." Well done, America; rights for everyone. Wait a minute: what did the word "men" mean when the Declaration's authors and signers owned slaves at the same time?! The word "men" actually meant White, land-owning, wealthy males. Women, poor people, and non-White people were not protected, as seen in the birth of the United States, where these people were not allowed to vote, and

White people could continue to own African and Native American descent people. For the next 87 years, the US continued slaving, denying those "truths" for many people in our country.

Now, how does one celebrate their own unalienable rights while concurrently taking those same rights away from their neighbors? Create a social system by which people are dehumanized. This is where our racial classification system came in.

> Race was used to judge the value of a human being. If someone was African, or of African descent, they had no rights, and could be sold for a negotiable price.

If someone was of European descent, they were considered priceless, unable to be owned because they had unalienable rights. This social value system was easy and fast to judge from a distance because it used physical traits to mark group membership. Dark, kinky hair; dark skin; wide nose; these physical traits were said to be the hallmarks of beastliness, making ownership of people with said traits acceptable. The traits are biological; the idea that these traits mark someone as property is not biological – it's social injustice.

Finally, the United States abolished slavery, but couldn't fix the *social* stigma that it had ingrained into people's psyche. The racial categorization system was no longer used to officially and monetarily value people, but it was still used to judge their *social* value. Bank loans are a great way to think about your social value. If you request a loan for a house purchase, the bank then searches vast amounts of records to determine if you are worthy, or valuable, enough for that loan. This information should only involve your financial history and practices. The bank doesn't need to know anything about your biology; timely loan payments are not coded for in DNA. However, frequently in America, people who can be visually classified as Black based on biological traits, have been considered not valuable enough to invest in by loan officers who were White.

This is why America stands at the Race Problem Anonymous podium. We have an active problem with judging people that started

with slavery. Even 151 years later, we are not sober at this meeting. We are, in fact, terribly hungover from slavery.

> We know judging people is wrong, but this racial classification system is deeply ingrained.

We have tried to stop, to get clean with phrases like "we don't see race," and "post-racial America." But America finds itself back at the same Race Problem Anonymous meeting year after year, because we keep doing things like locking the car doors only when young African American men walk by, and harshly judging Black women for being Black, and women. We've tried not talking about race, but it's not working. So let's dive into the biological markers we are hung up, and hungover, on.

This social race system uses biological traits to determine your membership in a particular group. Those traits do vary around the world. They do not, however, give you any information about the *value* of a human being. Take hair shape for example. Hair shaft cross-section dictates the overall behavior of your hair, from puffy to totally flat. Oval hair shafts create hair that is silky and wavy. Flat and ribbon-like hair shafts result in a kinking behavior. Perfectly round shafts are associated with straight and course hair. Many individuals have more than one shaft type growing on their head at once. Do any of these hair types predict how many advanced degrees a person will achieve in their lifetime? No; having oval hair shafts does not, for instance, inhibit or enhance your ability to write a Master's thesis. Does an oval shaft mean the hair will be wavy? Yes. Biologically, there is no *value* inherent in that hair shaft morphology; it's just part of normal human hair variation.

Another biological trait the race system has hijacked is nose shape. In America, thinner noses are included in the physical traits of the "White" race, and wider noses are included in the traits for the "Black" race. Let's look at the biology of noses. Noses are actually one situation where, on average, we do see different shapes between some populations. For this trait, I'm going to focus on the average skeletal nose width (the boney part, not the nostril part)

in European descent people, and in African descent people. What we find in studies of human variation is that African decent people frequently have rounded and wide anterior nasal apertures (opening for the nose in the skull), and European decent people tend to have narrow and tall anterior nasal apertures.

> What does this trend, wide in African descent and narrow in European descent, mean? If we use the thinking of America's race system, wide means unworthy and narrow means priceless. Does a nose shape biologically show that? No. Biologically, we see something that tells a story of human survival in extreme environments.

Humans have lived in a multitude of extreme climates around the world: hot and humid, hot and dry, cold and wet, and cold and dry. Extreme climates present physical challenges to human populations, and, over time, we see that human groups physically change, or adapt, to their environment. Nose shape is an excellent example. What does the nose do? It's most important function is to deliver warm, moist air to the lungs; the lungs are made of warm, moist, and incredibly sensitive tissue. Have you ever taken a huge breath through your mouth on a cold, clear, crisp winter day? Straight away, you're coughing, your chest is burning, and you're thinking about moving to Key West. That burning results from the damage done by the cold, dry air to the sensitive lung tissue. The nose protects the lungs by slowing down air movement, warming and moisturizing it inside the head before entering the lungs. In fact, we find that the thinner a nose is, the more the air bumps around inside the face, warming and moisturize it more completely. If we look at noses around the world, we see that people who live in cold and dry climates have thinner noses; these groups have adapted through time to better protect their lungs. Northern European populations survived Ice Age Europe for 20,000 years, and many European descent Americans have inherited their narrow nose shape. For people living in Africa, we see that the air is already warm, and frequently humid; there is no survival benefit to having

a specific nose shape, and therefore nose width is not restricted to a narrow size. We find average nose width is larger in African humans than in European humans. African descent Americans have inherited these wider noses.

These are nifty clues to our ancestors' survival around the world. Vladimir Putin? Descended from cold-adapted ancestors. Viola Davis? Descended from warm-adapted ancestors. One of these people speaks out for the respect of women and African Americans, and wins awards for her great work. The other is a former KGB agent, invades neighboring countries, and rides bears while shirtless, according to the internet. Does nose width have anything to do with the trustworthiness of either person? No.I'd trust one with my wallet, and I assume the other has already stolen my wallet, based on their activities and habits.

> That is how we should determine the value of a person, based on their personal activities and habits, not on their biological traits.

I'd like to delve into one more biological trait America is obsessed with: skin color. It is the easiest trait to "diagnose" from a distance, so it's everywhere: #OscarsSoWhite, and #BlackLivesMatter are a couple recent uses of these "race trait" terms. Let's dig into the biology of coloration. Skin, in humans and other animals, creates little molecules of pigment, called melanin, which are then stored in the skin's upper layer. Melanin is brown. Here's a major point I'd like to make: we are brown. We are not biologically white or black. We are various shades of brown. Aloe Blacc and Barry White are darker shades of brown than Shaun White and Jack Black, but they are all brown. Humans present a vast range of melanin production. Where does this variation come from?

Let's take a walk through our evolutionary past. *Homo sapiens*, the species we all belong to, evolved and originated in Africa, the oldest member of our species having been identified at the site of Omo Kibish, Ethiopia, aged 195,000 years old. Humans continued to live in Eastern Africa while endeavoring parts of the population spread

around the continent, with groups living on the coast of South Africa, 3,881 miles away, by 120,000 years ago. Eventually, groups from Eastern Africa began moving into the Middle East around 70,000 years ago. Humans then spread to Southern Asia and Australia by 50,000 years ago, then to Europe and Northern Asia about 40,000 years ago, and lastly into North and South America about 15,000 years ago.

What we realize from this is that A) we are all African, and B) we were all darkly pigmented when we lived in Africa and when some ancestors left Africa.

> That's right, until recently (and I mean within the last 7,000 years or so), we were all Black.

When people walked out of Africa and into places like Europe and Asia, those ancestors were Black. Actually, they were all very dark brown, as melanin is brown, but we should question what modern color labels mean to ourselves today, and how those labels would be applied to our ancestors.

Now, we see today that there is variation in melanin production by people around the world. Generally, we see that humans who live closer to the North Pole produce less melanin, while people who live near the equator produce much more melanin. This suggests a trend in relation to environmental factors, similar to that of nose width. Now melanin doesn't cool the body, but it does protect from something else that increases in intensity closer to the equator: ultraviolet radiation (UVR). UVR can penetrate the skin and do damage in two deadly ways. The first danger is that UVR can mutate skin cell DNA, causing deadly skin cancer at a very young age. The second danger is that UVR can enter the blood stream and destroy folic acid, a B vitamin vitally important for proper growth of a fetus's nervous system during pregnancy. Intense exposure to UVR can result in early death in the first case, and a reduced ability to create healthy babies in the second case. Therefore, what we see in areas of high UVR is skin that produces a lot of melanin, which absorbs

UVR before it can get to DNA or the blood stream. Near the equator, melanin saves our lives.

When people left Africa, they continued to produce large amounts of melanin while living in Northern Asia and Europe. Eventually, northern people started producing much less melanin. What triggered this change? We do find that UVR is not all bad, and that humans need to absorb some UVR to produce vitamin D. We make our own vitamin D when UVR passes by the melanin and creates a positive chemical change in the skin's middle layer. One of the most important vitamin D jobs is to initiate calcium absorption from food. Calcium builds healthy bones, among other things. For the survival of populations over thousands of years, the most important boney structure is the pelvis, because to keep a population going, there need to be babies. Babies need to pass through a well-shaped pelvis, or they can get stuck in the birth canal, resulting in the death of both mother and child. Too much melanin in the skin blocks vitamin D production in low UVR locations, such as Northern Asia and Europe, resulting in malformed bones.

Interestingly, early humans in Northern Eurasia consumed enough vitamin D in their diets to off-set their high melanin production, until they started farming between 10,000 and 5,000 years ago. Farming restricted the range of nutrients people ate, and all of a sudden, people needed their skin to make more vitamin D in these low UVR intensity areas. Northern groups no longer needed UVR protection; they needed to birth babies. Therefore, we see two recent mutation events, one in Asia and one in Europe, where people with new gene variants for low melanin production became the most common lineages in the north, able to absorb what little UVR shined on them.

> Biologically, what we see in people's skin color is a great story of survival and change. As humans have moved around the world, we adapted to environmental challenges.

Darkly pigmented people survive and have healthy babies in the face of high intensity UVR. Lightly pigmented people survive and

have healthy babies in the face of low intensity UVR. That's what skin color actually means. Biologically, we are all survivors. Jack Black's northern ancestors ate less vitamin D at some point, and then produced less melanin, surviving for thousands of years and genetically contributing to a very funny person. Black's pigmentation doesn't make him better than Barry White, whose ancestors warded off the effects of high intensity UVR for thousands and thousands of years and genetically contributed to a fantastic singer.

> These biological traits tell fantastic stories of our species. In the end, we are all priceless. This is how race doesn't actually exist.

If we think back to standing at the podium of the Race Problem Anonymous meeting, America needs to talk about race, not ignore it. When we recognize that race classification is falsely based on biology, we can separate our judgements from our genes. The differences between White and Black are not coded in our DNA; our judgements are falsely dictated by an ugly and oppressive social system.

> The great thing about social systems is that we make them, and we can break them. We broke the social system and legal oppression of women.

Votes; land ownership; pants! Yes, America abolished slavery, but we haven't yet abolished this social hangover of judging people based on their looks. Our race problem *is* surmountable when we recognize that we are biologically diverse, and socially the same.

As America speaks at the podium, our country should finish with, "Next time I see a person who looks differently from me, I'm going to think of our differences not in terms of an ugly value judgement, but as evidence for our shared chapters in the story of human survival. We may be physically different, but we're all just struggling

humans, surviving the best we can." Let's embrace our differences. For America's future. For Baltimore.

16. Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

"Gender and Sexuality"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Carol C. Mukhopadhyay (carol.mukhopadhyay@sjsu.edu)
Tami Blumenfield(tami.blumenfield@gmail.com)
Susan Harper (susanharperteaches@gmail.com)
Abby Gondek (abbygondek@outlook.com)

INTRODUCTION: SEX AND GENDER ACCORDING TO ANTHROPOLOGISTS

Anthropologists[1] are fond of pointing out that much of what we take for granted as "natural" in our lives is actually cultural—it is not grounded in the natural world or in biology but invented by

1. [2]
2. [1]

humans.[3] Because culture is invented, it takes different forms in different places and changes over time in those places. Living in the twenty-first century, we have witnessed how rapidly and dramatically culture can change, from ways of communicating to the emergence of same-sex marriage. Similarly, many of us live in culturally diverse settings and experience how varied human cultural inventions can be.

We readily accept that clothing, language, and music are cultural—invented, created, and alterable—but often find it difficult to accept that gender and sexuality are not natural but deeply embedded in and shaped by culture. We struggle with the idea that the division of humans into two and only two categories, "male" and "female," is not universal, that "male" and "female" are cultural concepts that take different forms and have different meanings cross-culturally. Similarly, human sexuality, rather than being simply natural is one of the most culturally significant, shaped, regulated, and symbolic of all human capacities. The concept of humans as either "heterosexual" or "homosexual" is a culturally and historically specific invention that is increasingly being challenged in the United States and elsewhere.

Part of the problem is that gender has a biological component, unlike other types of cultural inventions such as a sewing machine, cell phone, or poem. We do have bodies and there are some male-female differences, including in reproductive capacities and roles, albeit far fewer than we have been taught. Similarly, sexuality, sexual desires and responses, are partially rooted in human natural capacities. However, in many ways, sexuality and gender are like food. We have a biologically rooted need to eat to survive and we have the capacity to enjoy eating. What constitutes "food," what is "delicious" or "repulsive," the contexts and meanings that surround food and human eating—those are cultural. Many potentially edible

3. [4]

4. [2]

items are not "food" (rats, bumblebees, and cats in the United States, for example), and the concept of "food" itself is embedded in elaborate conventions about eating: how, when, with whom, where, "utensils," for what purposes? A "romantic dinner" at a "gourmet restaurant" is a complex cultural invention.

In short, gender and sexuality, like eating, have biological components. But cultures, over time, have erected complex and elaborate edifices around them, creating systems of meaning that often barely resemble what is natural and innate. We experience gender and sexuality largely through the prism of the culture or cultures to which we have been exposed and in which we have been raised.

In this chapter, we are asking you to reflect deeply on the ways in which what we have been taught to think of as natural, that is, our sex, gender, and our sexuality, is, in fact, deeply embedded in and shaped by our culture. We challenge you to explore exactly which, if any, aspects of our gender and our sexuality are totally natural.

One powerful aspect of culture, and a reason cultural norms feel so natural, is that we learn culture the way we learn our native language: without formal instruction, in social contexts, picking it up from others around us, without thinking. Soon, it becomes deeply embedded in our brains. We no longer think consciously about what the sounds we hear when someone says "hello" mean unless we do not speak English. Nor is it difficult to "tell the time" on a "clock" even though "time" and "clocks" are complex cultural inventions.

The same principles apply to gender and sexuality. We learn very early (by at least age three) about the categories of gender in our culture—that individuals are either "male" or "female" and that elaborate beliefs, behaviors, and meanings are associated with each gender. We can think of this complex set of ideas as a gender ideology or a cultural model of gender.All societies have gender ideologies, just as they have belief systems about other significant areas of life, such as health and disease, the natural world, and social

relationships, including family. For an activity related to this section, see Activity 1 in the Teaching Resources of the *Perspectives* website.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF GENDER

Gender Ideologies, Biology, and Culture

Gender vs. Sex

Words can reveal cultural beliefs. A good example is the term "sex." In the past, sex referred both to sexuality and to someone's biologic sex: male or female. Today, although sex still refers to sexuality, "gender" now means the categories male, female, or increasingly, other gender possibilities. Why has this occurred?

The change in terminology reflects profound alterations in gender ideology in the United States (and elsewhere). In the past, influenced by Judeo-Christian religion and nineteenth and twentieth century scientific beliefs, biology (and reproductive capacity) was literally considered to be destiny. Males and females, at least "normal" males and females, were thought to be born with different intellectual, physical, and moral capacities, preferences, tastes, personalities, and predispositions for violence and suffering.[5]

Ironically, many cultures, including European Christianity in the

5. [6]

6. [3]

Middle Ages, viewed women as having a strong, often "insatiable" sexual "drive" and capacity. But by the nineteenth century, women and their sexuality were largely defined in reproductive terms, as in their capacity to "carry a man's child." Even late-twentieth-century human sexuality texts often referred only to "reproductive systems," to genitals as "reproductive" organs, and excluded the "clitoris" and other female organs of sexual pleasure that had no reproductive function. For women, the primary, if not sole, legitimate purpose of sexuality was reproduction.[7]

Nineteenth and mid-twentieth century European and U.S. gender ideologies linked sexuality and gender in other ways.[9] Sexual preference—the sex to whom one was attracted—was "naturally" heterosexual, at least among "normal" humans, and "normal," according to mid-twentieth century Freudian-influenced psychology, was defined largely by whether one adhered to conventional gender roles for males and females. So, appropriately, "masculine" men were "naturally" attracted to "feminine" women and vice versa. Homosexuality, too, was depicted not just as a sexual preference but as gender-inappropriate role behavior, down to gestures and color of clothing.[11] This is apparent in old stereotypes of gay men as "effeminate" (acting like a female, wearing "female" fabrics such as silk or colors such as pink, and participating in "feminine" professions like ballet) and of lesbian women as "butch" (cropped hair, riding motorcycles, wearing leather—prototypical masculinity). Once again, separate phenomena—sexual preference and gender role performance—were conflated because of beliefs

7. [8]
8. [4]
9. [10]
10. [5]
11. [12]
12. [6]

that rooted both in biology. "Abnormality" in one sphere (sexual preference) was linked to "abnormality" in the other sphere (gendered capacities and preferences).

In short, the gender and sexual ideologies were based on biological determinism. According to this theory, males and females were supposedly born fundamentally different reproductively and in other major capacities and preferences and were "naturally" (biologically) sexually attracted to each other, although women's sexual "drive" was not very well developed relative to men's and was reproductively oriented.

Rejecting Biological Determinism

Decades of research on gender and sexuality, including by feminist anthropologists, has challenged these old theories, particularly biological determinism. We now understand that cultures, not nature, create the gender ideologies that go along with being born male or female and the ideologies vary widely, cross-culturally. What is considered "man's work" in some societies, such as carrying heavy loads, or farming, can be "woman's work" in others. What is "masculine" and "feminine" varies: pink and blue, for example, are culturally invented gender-color linkages, and skirts and "make-up" can be worn by men, indeed by "warriors." Hindu deities, male and female, are highly decorated and difficult to distinguish, at least by conventional masculinist U.S. stereotypes.



Hindu deities: Vishnu and his many "avatars" or forms (all male).



Hindu Deities: Vishnu and Goddess Shiva plus avatars.

Women can be thought of as stronger ("tougher," more "rational") than men. Phyllis Kaberry, an anthropologist who studied the Nsaw of Cameroon in the 1940s, said males in that culture argued that land preparation for the rizga crop was "a woman's job, which is too strenuous for the men" and that "women could carry heavy loads because they had stronger foreheads."[13] Among the Aka who live in the present-day Central African Republic, fathers have close, intimate, relationships with infants, play major roles in all aspects of infant-care, and can sometimes produce breast milk.[15] As for sexual desires, research on the human sexual response by William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson established that men and women have equal biological capacities for sexual pleasure and orgasm and

13. [14]
14. [7]
15. [16]
16. [8]

that, because males generally ejaculate simultaneously with orgasm, it is easier for women than men to have multiple orgasms.[17]

Gender: A Cultural Invention and a Social Role

One's biologic sex is a different phenomenon than one's gender, which is socially and historically constructed.[19] Gender is a set of culturally invented expectations and therefore constitutes a role one assumes, learns, and performs, more or less consciously. It is an "identity" one can in theory choose, at least in some societies, although there is tremendous pressure, as in the United States, to conform to the gender role and identity linked to your biologic sex. This is a profound transformation in how we think about both gender and sexuality. The reality of human biology is that males and females are shockingly similar.[21] There is arguably more variability *within* than *between* each gender, especially taking into account the enormous variability in human physical traits among human populations globally.[23]

17. [18]
18. [9]
19. [20]
20. [10]
21. [22]
22. [11]
23. [24]
24. [12]

The Gender Binary and Beyond

We anthropologists, as noted earlier, love to shake up notions of what is "natural" and "normal." One common assumption is that all cultures divide human beings into two and only two genders, a binary or dualistic model of gender. However, in some cultures gender is more fluid and flexible, allowing individuals born as one biologic sex to assume another gender or creating more than two genders from which individuals can select. Examples of non-binary cultures come from pre-contact Native America. Anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict long ago identified a fairly widespread phenomenon of "two-spirit" people, individuals who do not comfortably conform to the gender roles and gender ideology normally associated with their biologic sex. Among Zuni people of New Mexico, beginning in the pre-contact era which was a relatively gender-egalitarian horticultural society for example, individuals could choose an alternative role of "not-men" or "not-women." A two-spirited Zuni man would do the work and wear clothing normally associated with females, having shown a preference for female-identified activities and symbols at an early age. In some, but not all cases, they would eventually marry a man. Early European ethnocentric reports often described it as a form of homosexuality. Anthropologists suggested more-complex motivations, including dreams of selection by spirits, individual psychologies, biological characteristics, and negative aspects of male roles (e.g., warfare). Most significantly, these alternative gender roles are acceptable, publicly recognized, and sometimes venerated.[25]

Less is known about additional gender roles available to biological women, although stories of "manly hearted women" suggest a parallel among some Native American groups. For example, a

25. [26]

26. [13]

Kutenai woman known to have lived in 1811 was originally married to a French-Canadian man but then returned to the Kutenai and assumed a male gender role, changing her name to Kauxuma nupika (Gone-to-the-Spirits), becoming a spiritual prophet, and eventually marrying a woman.[27]

A well-known example of a non-binary gender system is found among the Hijra in India. Often called a third gender, these individuals are usually biologically male but adopt female clothing, gestures, and names; eschew sexual desire and sexual activity; and go through religious rituals that give them certain divine powers, including blessing or cursing couples' fertility and performing at weddings and births. Hijra may undergo voluntary surgical removal of genitals through a "nirvan" or rebirth operation. Some hijra are males born with ambiguous external genitals, such as a particularly small penis or testicles that did not fully descend.[29]

Research has shown that individuals with ambiguous genitals, sometimes called "intersex," are surprisingly common. Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein estimate that such intersex individuals constitute five percent of human births.[31] So what are cultures to do when faced with an infant or child who cannot easily be "sexed?" Some cultures, including the United States, used to force children into one of the two binary categories, even if it required surgery or hormone therapy. But in other places, such as India and among the Isthmus Zapotec in southern Oaxaca, Mexico, they have instead

27. [28]
28. [14]
29. [30]
30. [15]
31. [32]
32. [16]

created a third gender category that has an institutional identity and role to perform in society.[33]

These cross-cultural examples demonstrate that the traditional rigid binary gender model in the United States is neither universal nor necessary. While all cultures recognize at least two biological sexes, usually based on genitals visible at birth, and have created at least two gender roles, many cultures go beyond the binary model, offering a third or fourth gender category. Other cultures allow individuals to adopt, without sanctions, a gender role that is not congruent with their biological sex. In short, biology need not be destiny when it comes to gender roles, as we are increasingly discovering in the United States.

Variability Among Binary Cultures

Even societies with a binary gender system exhibit enormous variability in the meanings and practices associated with being male or female. Sometimes male-female distinctions pervade virtually all aspects of life, structuring space, work, social life, communication, body decoration, and expressive forms such as music. For instance, both genders may farm, but may have separate fields for "male" and "female" crops and gender-specific crop rituals. Or, the village public space may be spatially segregated with a "men's house" (a special dwelling only for men, like a "men's club") and a "women's house." In some societies, such as the Sambia of New Guinea, even when married couples occupy the same house, the space within the house is divided into male and female areas.[35]

33. [34]
34. [17]
35. [36]

Women and men can also have gender-specific religious rituals and deities and use gender-identified tools. There are cases of "male" and "female" foods, rains, and even "languages" (including words, verb forms, pronouns, inflections, and writing systems; one example is the Nu Shu writing system used by some women in parts of China in the twentieth century).[37]Gender ideologies can emphasize differences in character, capacities, and morality, sometimes portraying males and females as "opposites" on a continuum.

In societies that are highly segregated by gender, gender relationships sometimes are seen as hostile or oppositional with one of the genders (usually female) viewed as potentially threatening. Female bodily fluids, such as menstrual blood and vaginal secretions, can be dangerous, damaging to men, "impure," and "polluting," especially in ritual contexts. In other cases, however, menstrual blood is associated with positive power. A girl's first menstruation may be celebrated publicly with elaborate community rituals, as among the Bemba in southern Africa, and subsequent monthly flows bring special privileges.[39] Men in some small-scale societies go through ritualized nose-bleeding, sometimes called "male menstruation," though the meanings are quite complex.[41]

36. [18]
37. [38]
38. [19]
39. [40]
40. [20]
41. [42]
42. [21]

Gender Relations: Separate and Unequal

Of course, gender-differentiation is not unique to small-scale societies like the Sambia. Virtually all major world religions have traditionally segregated males and females spatially and "marked" them in other ways. Look at eighteenth- and nineteenth- century churches, which had gender-specific seating; at contemporary Saudi Arabia, Iranian, and conservative Malaysian mosques; and at Orthodox Jewish temples today in Israel and the United States.

Ambivalence and even fear of female sexuality, or negative associations with female bodily fluids, such as menstrual blood, are widespread in the world's major religions. Orthodox Jewish women are not supposed to sleep in the same bed as their husbands when menstruating. In Kypseli, Greece, people believe that menstruating women can cause wine to go bad.[43] In some Catholic Portuguese villages, menstruating women are restricted from preparing fresh pork sausages and from being in the room where the sausages are made as their presence is believed to cause the pork to spoil. Contact with these women also supposedly wilts plants and causes inexplicable movements of objects.[45] Orthodox forms of Hinduism prohibit menstruating women from activities such as cooking and attending temple.

These traditions are being challenged. A 2016 British Broadcasting Company (BBC) television program, for example, described "Happy to Bleed," a movement in India to change negative attitudes about

43. [44]
44. [22]
45. [46]
46. [23]

menstruation and eliminate the ban on menstruating-age women entering the famous Sabriamala Temple in Kerala.[47]

Emergence of Public (Male) vs. Domestic (Female) Spheres

In large stratified and centralized societies—that is, the powerful empires (so-called "civilizations") that have dominated much of the world for the past several thousand years—a "public" vs. "private" or "domestic" distinction appears. The public, extra-family sphere of life is a relatively recent development in human history even though most of us have grown up in or around cities and towns with their obvious public spaces, physical manifestations of the political, economic, and other extra-family institutions that characterize large-scale societies. In such settings, it is easy to identify the domestic or private spaces families occupy, but a similar public-domestic distinction exists in villages. The public sphere is associated with, and often dominated by, males. The domestic sphere, in contrast, is primarily associated with women—though it, too, can be divided into male and female spheres. In India, for example, where households frequently consist of multi-generational groups of male siblings and their families, there often are "lounging" spaces where men congregate, smoke pipes, chat, and meet visitors. Women's spaces typically focus around the kitchen or cooking hearth (if outside) or at other sites of women's activities.[49] In some cases, an inner court is the women's area while

47. [48]
48. [24]
49. [50]
50. [25]

the outer porch and roads that connect the houses are male spaces. In some Middle Eastern villages, women create over-the-roof paths for visiting each other without going "outside" into male spaces.[51]

The gender division between public and private/domestic, however, is as symbolic as it is spatial, often emphasizing a gender ideology of social separation between males and females (except young children), social regulation of sexuality and marriage, and male rights and control over females (wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers). It manifests as separate spaces in mosques, sex-segregated schools, and separate "ladies compartments" on trains, as in India (Figure 5).



A *women only train car in India. Photograph by Ajay Tallam, 2007.*

Of course, it is impossible to separate the genders completely. Rural women pass through the more-public spaces of a village to fetch water and firewood and to work in agricultural fields. Women shop in public markets, though that can be a "man's job." As girls more often attend school, as in India, they take public transportation and thus travel through public "male" spaces even if they travel to all-girl schools (Figure 6). At college, they can be immersed in and even live on campuses where men predominate, especially if they are studying engineering, computer science, or other technical subjects (Figure 7). This can severely limit Indian girls' educational and occupational choices, particularly for girls who come from relatively conservative families or regions.[53]

51. [52]
52. [26]
53. [54]

One way in which women navigate "male" spaces is by adopting routes, behavior (avoiding eye contact), and/or clothing that create separation.[55] The term "purdah," the separation or segregation of women from men, literally means "veiling," although other devices can be used. In nineteenth century Jaipur, Rajasthan, royal Rajput women inhabited the inner courtyard spaces of the palace. But an elaborate false building front, the hawa mahal, allowed them to view the comings and goings on the street without being exposed to the public male gaze.

As demand for educating girls has grown in traditionally sexually segregated societies, all-girl schools have been constructed (see Figure 6), paralleling processes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United States. At the university level, however, prestigious schools that offer high-demand subjects such as engineering often have historically been all-male, excluding women as Harvard once did.[57] In other cases, there are no female faculty members teaching traditionally male subjects like engineering at all-women colleges. In Saudi Arabia, women's universities have taught courses using closed-circuit television to avoid violating norms of sexual segregation, particularly for young, unmarried women.[59] In countries such as India, gynecologists and obstetricians have been predominantly female, in part because families object to male doctors examining and treating women. Thus, in places that do not have female physicians, women's health can suffer.

54. [27]
55. [56]
56. [28]
57. [58]
58. [29]
59. [60]
60. [30]



All-girls school in Bangalore, India. Photograph by Carol Mukhopadhyay, 1989.



Management studies graduate students at CUSAT-Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kerala, India. Photograph by Carol Mukhopadhyay, 1989.

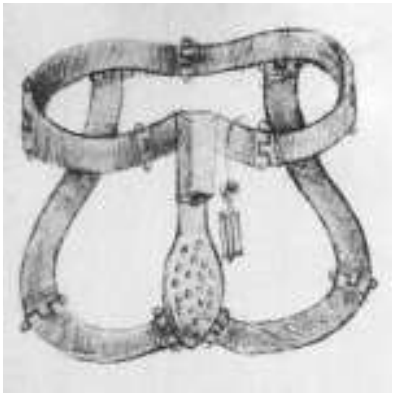
Sanctions, Sexuality, Honor, and Shame

Penalties for deviating from the rules of social separation vary across and within cultures. In small communities, neighbors and extended family kin can simply report inappropriate behavior, especially between unmarried young adults, to other family members. More severe and sometimes violent responses by family members can occur, especially if the family's "honor" is involved—that is, if the young adults, especially girls, engage in activities that would "shame" or dishonor the family. Honor and shame are complex concepts that are often linked to sexuality, especially female sexuality, and to behavior by family members that involves or hints at sexual impropriety. The Turkish film *Mustang*, nominated for the 2016 best foreign film Academy Award, offers a good illustration of how concepts of sexualized honor and shame operate.

We hear in the news of "honor killings" carried out by conservative Muslims in countries such as Pakistan and powerfully portrayed in documentaries such as *A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness* (2015).[61] But it is not just Islam. Some orthodox sectors of major religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism, may hold similar views about "honor" and "shame" and impose sometimes violent sanctions against those who violate sexuality-related codes. The brutal 2012 gang rape-murder of a young woman on a bus in Delhi, though perpetrated by strangers, was rationalized by the men who committed the crime (and their defense attorney) as a legitimate response to the woman's "shameful" behavior—traveling on a bus at night with a male friend, implying sexual impropriety.[63]

61. [62]
62. [31]
63. [64]

Social separation, sex-segregated schools, and penalties for inappropriate sexual behavior have also existed in the United States and Europe, especially among upper-strata women for whom female "purity" was traditionally emphasized. Chastity belts in Europe, whether or not actually used, symbolized the idea that a woman's sexuality belonged solely to her husband, thus precluding her from engaging not only in premarital and extra-marital sex but also in masturbation (Figure 8).[65] In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, set in mid-sixteenth century Massachusetts, Hester was forced to wear a scarlet A on her dress and to stand on a public scaffold for three hours a day, a relatively nonviolent but powerful form of shaming and punishment. Stoning women to death for sexually inappropriate behavior, especially adultery, and other violent sanctions may have occurred in some European Christian and Jewish communities.



A sketch of a chastity belt, c. 1405.

Rape, so frequent in warfare past and present, also can bring shame to the victim and her family, particularly in sexually conservative societies. During the 1971 Bangladesh war of independence against Pakistan, East Bengali women who were raped by soldiers were ostracized by their families because of the "shame" their rape had brought. During the partition of India into India and Pakistan in 1947, some Sikh families reportedly forced daughters to jump into wells to drown rather than risk being raped by strangers.[67]

64. [32]
65. [66]
66. [33]
67. [68]

Alternative Models of Gender: Complementary and Fluid

Not all binary cultures are gender-segregated; nor does gender hostility necessarily accompany gender separation. Nor are all binary cultures deeply concerned with, some might say obsessed with, regulating female sexuality and marriage. Premarital and extra-marital sex can even be common and acceptable, as among the !Kung San and Trobriand Islanders.[69] And men are not always clearly ranked over women as they typically are in stratified large-scale centralized societies with "patriarchal" systems. Instead, the two genders can be seen as complementary, equally valued and both recognized as necessary to society. Different need not mean unequal. The Lahu of southwest China and Thailand exemplify a complementary gender system in which men and women have distinct expected roles but a male-female pair is necessary to accomplish most daily tasks (Figure 9). A male-female pair historically took responsibility for local leadership. Male-female dyads completed daily household tasks in tandem and worked together in the fields. The title of anthropologist Shanshan Du's book, *Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs* (1999), encapsulates how complementary gender roles defined Lahu society. A single chopstick is not very useful; neither is a single person, man or woman, in a dual-focused society.[71]

68. [34]
69. [70]
70. [35]
71. [72]
72. [36]



Lahu farmers in Chiangmai, Thailand.

Like the Lahu, the nearby Na believe men and women both play crucial roles in a family and household. Women are associated with birth and life while men take on tasks such as butchering animals and preparing for funerals (Figures 10 and 11). Every Na house has two large pillars in the central hearth room, one representing male identity and one representing female identity. Both are crucial, and the house might well topple symbolically without both pillars. As sociologist Zhou Huashan explained in his 2002 book about the Na, this is a society that "values women without diminishing men."[73]

73. [74]

74. [37]



A Na woman, Sigih Lamu, weeds rice seedlings outside her family's home in southwest China's Yunnan Province. Photograph by Tami Blumenfield, 2002.



Na men carry a wooden structure to be used at a funeral. Photograph by Tami Blumenfield, 2002.

Anthropologists have also encountered relatively androgynous gender-binary cultures. In these cultures, some gender differentiation exists but "gender bending" and role-crossing are frequent, accepted, and reflect circumstances and individual capacities and preferences. Examples are the !Kung San mentioned earlier, Native American Washoe in the United States, and some segments of European societies in countries such as Sweden and Finland and, increasingly, in the United States.[75] Contemporary twenty-first century gender ideologies tend to emphasize commonality, not difference: shared human traits, flexibility, fluidity, and individual expression.

Even cultures with fairly well-defined gender roles do not

75. [76]

76. [38]

necessarily view them as fixed, biologically rooted, permanent, "essentialist," or "naturalized" as occurred in the traditional gender ideology in the United States.[77] Gender may not even be an "identity" in a psychological sense but, rather, a social role one assumes in a particular social context just as one moves between being a student, a daughter, an employee, a wife or husband, president of the bicycle club, and a musician.

Cultures also change over time through internal and external forces such as trade, conquest, colonialism, globalization, immigration, mass media, and, especially, films. Within every culture, there is tremendous diversity in class, ethnicity, religion, region, education level, and generation, as well as diversity related to more-individual family circumstances, predilections, and experiences. Gender expectations also vary with one's age and stage in life as well as one's social role, even within the family (e.g., "wife" vs. "sister" vs. "mother" vs. "mother-in-law" and "father" vs. "son" vs. "brother" vs "father-in-law"). Finally, people can appear to conform to cultural norms but find ways of working around or ignoring them.

Even in highly male-dominated, sexually segregated societies, women find ways to pursue their own goals, to be actors, and to push the boundaries of the gender system. Among Egyptian Awlad 'Ali Bedouin families, for example, women rarely socialized outside their home compounds or with unrelated men. But within their spheres, they freely interacted with other women, could influence their husbands, and wrote and sang poetic couplets as expressive outlets.[79] In some of the poorest and least-developed areas of central India, where patrilocal extended-family male-controlled households reign, activist Sampat Pal has organized local rural

77. [78]
78. [39]
79. [80]
80. [40]

women to combat violence based on dishonor and gender.[81] Her so-called "Gulabi Gang," the subject of two films, illustrates both the possibilities of resistance and the difficulties of changing a deeply embedded system based on gender, caste, and class system (Figure 12).[83] For a related activity, see Activity 2: Understanding Gender from a Martian Perspective.



Gulabi Gang in India

CONTEMPORARY ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO STUDYING SEXUALITY AND

81. [82]
82. [41]
83. [84]
84. [42]

GENDER

Contemporary anthropology now recognizes the crucial role played by gender in human society. Anthropologists in the post-2000 era have focused on exploring fluidity within and beyond sexuality, incorporating a gendered lens in all anthropological research, and applying feminist science frameworks, discourse-narrative analyses, political theory, critical studies of race, and queer theory to better understand and theorize gendered dynamics and power. Pleasure, desire, trauma, mobility, boundaries, reproduction, violence, coercion, bio-politics, globalization, neoliberal "development" policies and discourses, immigration, and other areas of anthropological inquiry have also informed gender and sexuality studies. We next discuss some of those trends.[85]

Heteronormativity and Sexuality in the United States

In the long history of human sexual relationships, we see that most involve people from different biological sexes, but some societies recognize and even celebrate partnerships between members of the same biological sex.[87] In some places, religious institutions formalize unions while in others unions are recognized only once they result in a pregnancy or live birth. Thus, what many people in the United States consider "normal," such as the

85. [86]
86. [124]
87. [88]
88. [125]

partnership of one man and one woman in a sexually exclusive relationship legitimized by the state and federal government and often sanctioned by a religious institution, is actually heteronormative. Heteronormativity is a term coined by French philosopher Michel Foucault to refer to the often-unnoticed system of rights and privileges that accompany normative sexual choices and family formation. For example, a "biologically female" woman attracted to a "biologically male" man who pursued that attraction and formed a relationship with that man would be following a heteronormative pattern in the United States. If she married him, she would be continuing to follow societal expectations related to gender and sexuality and would be agreeing to state involvement in her love life as she formalizes her relationship.

Despite pervasive messages reinforcing heteronormative social relations, people find other ways to satisfy their sexual desires and organize their families. Many people continue to choose partners from the so-called "opposite" sex, a phrase that reflects the old U.S. bipolar view of males and females as being at opposite ends of a range of characteristics (strong-weak, active-passive, hard-soft, outside-inside, Mars-Venus).[89] Others select partners from the same biological sex. Increasingly, people are choosing partners who attract them—perhaps female, perhaps male, and perhaps someone with ambiguous physical sexual characteristics.

Labels have changed rapidly in the United States during the twenty-first century as a wider range of sexual orientations has been openly acknowledged, accompanied by a shift in our binary view of sexuality. Rather than thinking of individuals as either heterosexual OR homosexual, scholars and activists now recognize a *spectrum* of sexual orientations. Given the U.S. focus on identity, it is not surprising that a range of new personhood categories, such

89. [90]

90. [126]

as bisexual, queer, questioning, lesbian, and gay have emerged to reflect a more-fluid, shifting, expansive, and ambiguous conception of sexuality and sexual identity.

Transgender, meanwhile, is a category for people who identify as a different gender than the one that was assigned to them at birth. This may entail a social transition or a physical one, using a number of methods. Anthropologist David Valentine explored how the concept of "transgender" became established in the United States and found that many people who were identified by others as transgender did not embrace the label themselves. This label, too, has undergone a profound shift in usage. By 2011, an estimated 8.7 million people in the United States identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender.[91] These communities represent a vibrant, growing, and increasingly politically and economically powerful segment of the population. While people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender—or any of a number of other sexual and gender minorities—have existed throughout the United States' history, it is only since the Stonewall uprisings of 1969 that the modern LGBT movement has been a key force in U.S. society.[93] Some activists, community members, and scholars argue that LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender) is a better choice of labels than GLBT since it puts lesbian identity in the foreground—a key issue because the term "gay" is often used as an umbrella term and can erase recognition of individuals who are not gay males. Recently, the acronym has been expanded to include LGBTQ (queer or questioning), LGBTQQ (both queer and questioning), LGBTQIA (queer/questioning, intersex, and/or asexual), and LGBTQAIA (adding allies as well).

91. [92]
92. [128]
93. [94]
94. [129]

Like the U.S. population overall, the LGBTQ community is extremely diverse. Some African-Americans prefer the term "same-gender loving" because the other terms are seen as developed by and for "white people." Emphasizing the importance and power of words, Jafari Sinclaire Allen explains that "same-gender loving" was "coined by the black queer activist Cleo Manago [around 1995] to mark a distinction between 'gay' and 'lesbian' culture and identification, and black men and women who have sex with members of the same sex."[95] While scholars continue to use gay, lesbian, and queer and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control uses MSM (men who have sex with men), "same-gender loving" resonates in some urban communities.

Not everyone who might fit one of the LGBTQQIA designations consciously identifies with a group defined by sexual orientation. Some people highlight their other identities, as Minnesotans, for example, or their ethnicity, religion, profession, or hobby—whatever they consider central and important in their lives. Some scholars argue that heteronormativity allows people who self-identify as heterosexual the luxury of not being defined by their sexual orientation. They suggest that those who identify with the sex and gender they were assigned at birth be referred to as cisgender.[97] Only when labels are universal rather than used only for non-normative groups, they argue, will people become aware of discrimination based on differences in sexual preference.

Though people are urging adoption of sexual identity labels, not everyone is embracing the move to self-identify in a specific category. Thus, a man who is attracted to both men and women might self-identify as bisexual and join activist communities while

95. [96]
96. [130]
97. [98]
98. [131]

another might prefer not to be incorporated into any sexual-preference-based politics. Some people prefer to eliminate acronyms altogether, instead embracing terms such as *genderfluid* and *genderqueer* that recognize a spectrum instead of a static identity. This freedom to self-identify or avoid categories altogether is important. Most of all, these shifts and debates demonstrate that, like the terms themselves, LGBTQ communities in the United States are diverse and dynamic with often-changing priorities and makeup.

Sexuality Outside the United States

Same-sex sexual and romantic relationships probably exist in every society, but concepts like "gay," "lesbian," and "bisexual" are cultural products that, in many ways, reflect a culturally specific gender ideology and a set of beliefs about how sexual preferences develop. In many cultures (such as the Sambia discussed above), same-sex sex is a behavior, not an identity. Some individuals in India identify as practicing "female-female sexuality" or "male-male sexuality." The film *Fire* by Mira Nair aroused tremendous controversy in India partly because it depicted a same-sex relationship between two married women somewhat graphically and because it suggested alternatives available to women stuck in unhappy and abusive patriarchal marriages.[99] Whether one is "homosexual" or "heterosexual" may not be linked simply to engaging in same-sex sexual behavior. Instead, as among some Brazilian males, your status in the sexual relationship, literally and symbolically, depends on (or determines!) whether you are the

99. [100]

100. [139]

inserter or the penetrated.[101] Which would you expect involves higher status?

Even anthropologists who are sensitive to cross-cultural variations in the terms and understandings that accompany same-sex sexual and romantic relationships can still unconsciously project their own meanings onto other cultures. Evelyn Blackwood, an American, described how surprised she was to realize that her Sumatran lover, who called herself a "Tombois," had a different conception of what constituted a "lesbian" identity and lesbian relationship than she did.[103] We must be careful not to assume that other cultures share LGBTQ identities as they are understood in the United States and many European countries.

Furthermore, each country has its own approach to sexuality and marriage, and reproduction often plays a central role. In Israel, an embrace of pro-natalist policies for Jewish Israelis has meant that expensive reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization are provided to women at no cost or are heavily subsidized. An Israeli gay activist described how surprised queer activists from other countries were when they found that nearly all Israeli female same-sex couples were raising children. (This embrace of same-sex parenting did not extend to male couples, for whom the state did not provide assisted reproductive support.) The pro-natalist policies can be traced in part to Israel's emergence as a state: founded in the aftermath of persecution and systematic genocide of Jewish residents of Europe from 1937 through 1945, Israel initially promoted policies that encouraged births at least in part as resistance to Nazi attempts to destroy the Jewish people. The

101. [102]
102. [140]
103. [104]
104. [141]

contexts may be less dramatic elsewhere, but local and national histories often inform policies and practices.

In Thailand, Ara Wilson has explored how biological women embrace identities as *toms* and *dees*. Although these terms seem to be derived from English-language concepts (*dees* is etymologically related to "ladies"), suggesting international influences, the ubiquity and acceptance of *toms* and *dees* in Thailand does diverge from patterns in the United States.[105]

In China (as elsewhere), the experiences of those involved in male-male sexuality and those involved in female-female sexuality can differ. In her book *Shanghai Lalas: Female Tongzhi Communities and Politics in Urban China*, Lucetta Yip Lo Kam discusses how lesbians in China note their lack of public social spaces compared with gay men.[107] Even the words *lala* and *tongzhi* index different categories from the English terms: *lala* encompasses lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people while *tongzhi* is a gloss term that usually refers to gay men but has been expanded in the last two decades to other uses. (*Tongzhi* is a cooptation of the Chinese-language socialist-era term for *comrade*.)

Language makes a difference in how individuals and communities articulate their identities. Anthropologists such as Kam have commented on how sharing their own backgrounds with those with whom they work can be instrumental in gaining trust and building rapport. Her identity as a Chinese-speaking queer anthropologist and activist from Hong Kong helped women in Shanghai feel comfortable speaking with her and willing to include her in their networks.[109]

105. [106]
106. [142]
107. [108]
108. [143]
109. [110]

From these examples, we see that approaches to sexuality in different parts of the world are evolving, just as gender norms in the United States are undergoing tremendous shifts. Anthropologists often cross boundaries to research these changes, and their contributions will continue to shape understandings of the broad range of approaches to sexuality.

Anthropology of the Body

Another important topic for anthropologists interested in gender and sexuality is the anthropology of the body, sometimes referred to as embodied anthropology. Viewing the human body as an analytic category offers exciting new theoretical possibilities.[111] Topics that have attracted particular attention include popular and scientific representations of the body; (dis)ability; the anthropology of obesity; the politics of reproduction; coercion; complex issues associated with genital modifications such as female circumcision; and the relationship between bodies and borders.[113] Who can cross which lines physically (think about national borders), emotionally, psychologically, and socially? Embodied anthropology foregrounds these questions.

Anthropologists increasingly write about their own experiences using an auto-ethnographic mode. For example, Pamela Runestad examined how her time as a patient in a Japanese maternity ward influenced her understanding of the importance of carefully crafted

110. [144]
111. [112]
112. [145]
113. [114]
114. [146]

meals and nutrition for HIV/AIDS patients.[115] In subsequent research on HIV/AIDS in Japan, she probed more deeply into how patients' nourishment inside and outside clinical settings affected their perceptions of health.

Anthropology of the body overlaps with work on gender and sexuality, including the discourse surrounding women's bodies and reproductive functions. Emily Martin's pioneering book, *The Woman in the Body*, critically examined lay women and medical descriptions of menstruation, child-bearing, and menopause in the United States. She identified a scientific ideology of reproduction that is infused with traditional U.S. binary gender stereotypes similar to those in man-the-hunter origin stories. In her classic essay about what she calls a "scientific fairy tale," Martin describes how U.S. biology texts represented the egg and sperm as romantic partners whose actions are described with passive or active verbs according to gendered assumptions.[117]

I realized that the picture of egg and sperm drawn in popular as well as scientific accounts of reproductive biology relies on stereotypes central to our cultural definitions of male and female. The stereotypes imply not only that female biological processes are less worthy than their male counterparts but also that women are less worthy than men. Part of my goal in writing this article is to shine a bright light on the gender stereotypes hidden within the scientific language of biology.[119]

Subsequent work has challenged the "sperm penetrates egg" model of fertilization, noting that it is medically inaccurate and

115. [116]
116. [147]
117. [118]
118. [148]
119. [120]
120. [149]

reinforces male-active-dominant, female-passive (penetrated) gender models. In reality, the egg and sperm fuse, but the egg activates the sperm by releasing molecules that are crucial for it to find and adhere to the egg.[121] Old videos like *The Miracle of Life* offer, in their narration and background music, striking examples of the cultural ideology of reproduction in the United States that Martin and others have described.[123]

In another classic essay, Corinne Hayden explored interactions between biology, family, and gender among lesbian couples. Even though both members of the lesbian couples she studied did not necessarily contribute biologically to their offspring, the women and their families found ways to embrace these biological differences and develop a new formulation of family that involved biological connection but was not limited to it.[125]

Some research analyzes the body, especially the female body, as a site of coercion and expression of power relations by individuals (e.g., partner rape and domestic violence), but state-sanctioned collective acts also occur, such as using women as "sex slaves" (Japan's so-called "Comfort Women" during World War II) and using civilian rape as a form of psychological warfare. Anthropologists document other ways in which states exert power over bodies—through family planning policies (China's planned birth policy), legislation that bans (or permits) artificial forms of contraception and abortion, and government programs to promote fertility, including subsidized infertility treatments.[127] For example,

121. [122]
122. [150]
123. [124]
124. [151]
125. [126]
126. [152]
127. [128]

Turkish anthropologists have described how state policies in Turkey have appropriated, for state purposes, sexual issues of concern to Turkish families, such as assisted reproduction for disabled war veterans and treatment of vaginismus, a condition that prevents women from engaging in sexual intercourse. Power relationships are also associated with new reproductive technologies. For example, the availability of amniocentesis often contributes to shifts in the ratio of male and female babies born. Unequal power relations are also in play between surrogate mothers (often poor women) and wealthier surrogate families desiring children.[129]

128. [153]
129. [130]
130. [154]

17. Gender, Sex, and Sexuality (Part II)

"Gender and Sexuality"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Carol C. Mukhopadhyay (carol.mukhopadhyay@sjsu.edu)
Tami Blumenfield(tami.blumenfield@gmail.com)
Susan Harper (susanharperteaches@gmail.com)
Abby Gondek (abbygondek@outlook.com)

UNRAVELING OUR GENDER MYTHS: PRIMATE ROOTS, "MAN THE HUNTER", and OTHER "ORIGIN STORIES" OF GENDER AND MALE DOMINANCE

Even unencumbered by pregnancy or infants, a female hunter would be less fleet, generally less strong, possibly more prone to changes in emotional *tonus* as a consequence of the estrus cycle,

and less able to adapt to changes in temperature than males.[1]
—U.S. anthropologist, 1969

Women don't ride motorcycles because they can't; they can't because they are not strong enough to put their legs down to stop it.[3]
—Five-year-old boy, Los Angeles, 1980

Men hunted because women were not allowed to come out of their houses and roam about in forests.[5]
—Pre-college student in India, 1990

All cultures have "creation" stories. Many have elaborate gender-related creation stories that describe the origins of males and females, their gender-specific traits, their relationships and sexual proclivities, and, sometimes, how one gender came to "dominate" the other. Our culture is no different. The Judeo-Christian Bible, like the Koran and other religious texts, addresses origins and gender (think of Adam and Eve), and traditional folk tales, songs, dances, and epic stories, such as the Ramayana in Hinduism and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, treat similar themes.

Science, too, has sought to understand gender differences. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a number of scientists, immersed in Darwinian theories, began to explore the evolutionary roots of what they assumed to be universal: male dominance. Of course, scientists, like the rest of us, view the world partially through their own cultural lenses and through a gendered

1. [2]
2. [43]
3. [4]
4. [44]
5. [6]
6. [45]

version. Prior to the 1970s, women and gender relations were largely invisible in the research literature and most researchers were male so it is not surprising that 1960s theories reflected prevailing male-oriented folk beliefs about gender.[7]

The Hunting Way of Life "Molds Man" (and Woman)

The most popular and persistent theories argued that male dominance is universal, rooted in species-wide gendered biological traits that we acquired, first as part of our primate heritage, and further developed as we evolved from apes into humans. Emergence of "the hunting way of life" plays a major role in this story.

Crucial components include: a diet consisting primarily of meat, obtained through planned, cooperative hunts, by all-male groups, that lasted several days and covered a wide territory. Such hunts would require persistence, skill, and physical stamina; tool kits to kill, butcher, transport, preserve, and share the meat; and a social organization consisting of a stable home base and a monogamous nuclear family. Several biological changes were attributed to adopting this way of life: a larger and more complex brain, human language, an upright posture (and humans' unique foot and stride), loss of body hair, a long period of infant dependency, and the absence of "estrus" (ovulation-related female sexual arousal) (Figure 13), which made females sexually "receptive" throughout the monthly cycle. Other human characteristics purportedly made sex more enjoyable: frontal sex and fleshier breasts, buttocks, and genitals, especially the human penis. Making sex "sexier," some

7. [8]

8. [46]

speculated, cemented the pair-bond, helping to keep the man "around" and the family unit stable.[9]

Hunting was also linked to a "world view" in which the flight of animals from humans seemed natural and (male) aggression became normal, frequent, easy to learn, rewarded, and enjoyable. War, some have suggested, might psychologically be simply a form of hunting and pleasurable for male participants.[11] The Hunting Way of Life, in short, "molded man," giving our species its distinctive characteristics. And as a result, we contemporary humans cannot erase the effects of our hunting past even though we live in cities, stalk nothing but a parking place, and can omit meat from our diets.

> The biology, psychology, and customs that separate us from the apes—all these we owe to the hunters of time past. And, although the record is incomplete and speculation looms larger than fact, for those who would understand the origin and nature of human behavior there is no choice but to try to understand "Man the Hunter."
> —Washburn and Lancaster (1974)[13]

Gender roles and male dominance were supposed to be part of our evolutionary heritage. Males evolved to be food-providers—stronger, more aggressive, more effective leaders with cooperative and bonding capacities, planning skills, and technological inventiveness (tool-making). In this creation story,

9. [10]
10. [47]
11. [12]
12. [48]
13. [14]
14. [49]

females never acquired those capacities because they were burdened by their reproductive roles—pregnancy, giving birth, lactation, and child care—and thus became dependent on males for food and protection. The gender gap widened over time. As males initiated, explored, invented, women stayed at home, nurtured, immersed themselves in domestic life. The result: men are active, women are passive; men are leaders, women are followers; men are dominant, women are subordinate.

Many of us have heard pieces of this Hunting Way of Life story. Some of the men Mukhopadhyay interviewed in Los Angeles in the late 1970s invoked "our hunting past" to explain why they—and men generally—operated barbeques rather than their wives. Women's qualifications to be president were questioned on biological grounds such as "stamina" and "toughness." Her women informants, all hospital nurses, doubted their navigational abilities, courage, and strength despite working in intensive care and regularly lifting heavy male patients. Mukhopadhyay encountered serious scholars who cited women's menstrual cycle and "emotional instability" during ovulation to explain why women "can't" hunt.

Similar stories are invoked today for everything from some men's love of hunting to why men dominate "technical" fields, accumulate tools, have extra-marital affairs or commit the vast majority of homicides. Strength and toughness remain defining characteristics of masculinity in the United States, and these themes often permeate national political debates.[15] One element in the complex debate over gun control is the male-masculine strength-through-guns and man-the-hunter association, and it is still difficult for some males in the United States to feel comfortable with their soft, nurturant, emotional, and artistic sides.[17]

15. [16]
16. [50]
17. [18]

What is most striking about man-the-hunter scenarios is how closely they resemble 1950s U.S. models of family and gender, which were rooted in the late nineteenth century "cult of domesticity" and "true womanhood." Father is "head" of the family and the final authority, whether in household decisions or in disciplining children. As "provider," Father goes "outside" into the cold, cruel world, hunting for work. Mother, as "chief mom," remains "inside" at the home base, creating a domestic refuge against the "survival of the fittest" "jungle." American anthropologists seemed to have subconsciously projected their own folk models onto our early human ancestors.

Altering this supposedly "fundamental" gender system, according to widely read authors in the 1970s, would go against our basic "human nature." This belief was applied to the political arena, then a virtually all-male domain, especially at state and national levels. The following quote from 1971 is particularly relevant and worthy of critical evaluation since, for the first time, a major U.S. political party selected a woman as its 2016 presidential candidate (See Text Box 3, Gender and the Presidential Election).

> To make women equal participants in the political process, we will have to change the very process itself, which means changing a pattern bred into our behavior over the millennia.
>
> —Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox[19]

18. [51]
19. [20]
20. [52]

Replacing Stories with Reality

Decades of research, much of it by a new generation of women scholars, have altered our view of the hunting way of life in our evolutionary past.[21] For example, the old stereotype of primates as living in male-centered, male-dominated groups does not accurately describe our closest primate relatives, gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos. The stereotypes came from 1960s research on savannah, ground-dwelling baboons that suggested they were organized socially by a stable male-dominance hierarchy, the "core" of the group, that was established through force, regulated sexual access to females, and provided internal and external defense of the "troop" in a supposedly hostile savannah environment.[23] Females lacked hierarchies or coalitions, were passive, and were part of dominant male "harems."

Critics first argued that baboons, as monkeys rather than apes, were too far removed from humans evolutionarily to tell us much about early human social organization. Then, further research on baboons living in other environments by primatologists such as Thelma Rowell discovered that those baboons were neither male-focused nor male-dominated. Instead, the stable group core was matrifocal—a mother and her offspring constituted the central and enduring ties. Nor did males control female sexuality. Quite the contrary in fact. Females mated freely and frequently, choosing males of all ages, sometimes establishing special relationships—"friends with favors." Dominance, while infrequent, was not based simply on size or strength; it was learned, situational, and often stress-induced. And like other primates, both male and female

21. [22]
22. [53]
23. [24]
24. [54]

baboons used sophisticated strategies, dubbed "primate politics," to predict and manipulate the intricate social networks in which they lived.[25]

Rowell also restudied the savannah baboons. Even they did not fit the baboon "stereotype." She found that their groups were loosely structured with no specialized stable male-leadership coalitions and were sociable, matrifocal, and infant-centered much like the Rhesus monkeys pictured below (see Figure 15). Females actively initiated sexual encounters with a variety of male partners. When attacked by predators or frightened by some other major threat, males, rather than "defending the troop," typically would flee, running away first and leaving the females carrying infants to follow behind (Figures 16).[27]

Man the Hunter, the Meat-Eater?

The second, more important challenge was to key assumptions about the hunting way of life. Archaeological and paleontological fossil evidence and ethnographic data from contemporary foragers revealed that hunting and meat it provided were not the primary subsistence mode. Instead, gathered foods such as plants, nuts, fruits, roots and small fish found in rivers and ponds constituted the bulk of such diets and provided the most stable food source in all but a few settings (northerly climates, herd migration routes, and specific geographical and historical settings). When meat was important, it was more often "scavenged" or "caught" than hunted.

25. [26]
26. [55]
27. [28]
28. [56]

A major symposium on human evolution concluded that "opportunistic" "scavenging" was probably the best description of early human hunting activities. Often, tools found in pre-modern human sites such as caves would have been more appropriate for "smashing" scavenged bones than hunting live animals.[29] Hunting, when carried out, generally did not involve large-scale, all-male, cooperative expeditions involving extensive planning and lengthy expeditions over a wide territorial range. Instead, as among the Hadza of Tanzania, hunting was likely typically conducted by a single male, or perhaps two males, for a couple of hours, often without success. When hunting collectively, as occurs among the Mbuti in the Central African rainforest, groups of families likely participated with women and men driving animals into nets. Among the Agta of the Philippines, women rather than men hunt collectively using dogs to herd animals to a place where they can be killed.[31] And !Kung San men, despite what was shown in the 1957 ethnographic film *The Hunters*, do not normally hunt giraffe; they usually pursue small animals such as hares, rats, and gophers.

Discrediting the Hunting Hypothesis

Once the "hunting-meat" hypothesis was discredited, other parts of the theory began to unravel, especially the link between male dominance and female economic dependency. We now know that for most of human history—99 percent of it prior to the invention of agriculture some 10,000 or so years ago—women have "worked,"

29. [30]
30. [57]
31. [32]
32. [58]

often providing the stable sources of food for their family. Richard Lee, Marjorie Shostak, and others have detailed, with caloric counts and time-work estimates, the significance of women's gathering contributions even in societies such as the !Kung San, in which hunting occurs regularly.[33] In foraging societies that rely primarily on fish, women also play a major role, "collecting" fish from rivers, lakes, and ponds. The exceptions are atypical environments such as the Arctic.



Collecting firewood in Bansankusu, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Of course, "meat-getting" is a narrow definition of "food getting" or "subsistence" work. Many food processing activities are time-consuming. Collecting water and firewood is crucial, heavy work and is often done by women (Figure 17). Making and maintaining clothing, housing, and tools also occupy a significant amount of time. Early humans, both male and female, invented an array of items for carrying things (babies, wood, water), dug tubers, processed nuts, and cooked food. The invention of string some 24,000 years ago, a discovery so essential that it produced what some have called the "String Revolution," is attributed to women.[35] There is the "work of kinship," of "healing," of "ritual," of "teaching" the next generation, and emotional "work. All are part of the work of living and of the "invisible" work that women do.

33. [34]
34. [59]
35. [36]
36. [60]

Nor is it just hunting that requires intelligence, planning, cooperation, and detailed knowledge. Foragers have lived in a wide variety of environments across the globe, some more challenging than others (such as Alaska). In all of these groups, both males and females have needed and have developed intensive detailed knowledge of local flora and fauna and strategies for using those resources. Human social interactions also require sophisticated mental and communication skills, both verbal and nonverbal. In short, humans' complex brains and other modern traits developed as an adaptation to complex social life, a lengthy period of child-dependency and child-rearing that required cooperative nurturing, and many different kinds of "work" that even the simplest human societies performed.

Refuting Pregnancy and Motherhood as Debilitating

Finally, cross-cultural data refutes another central man-the-hunter stereotype: the "burden" of pregnancy and child care. Women's reproductive roles do not generally prevent them from food-getting, including hunting; among the Agta, women hunt when pregnant. Foraging societies accommodate the work-reproduction "conflict" by spacing out their pregnancies using indigenous methods of "family planning" such as prolonged breast feeding, long post-pregnancy periods of sexual inactivity, and native herbs and medicinal plants. Child care, even for infants, is rarely solely the responsibility of the birth mother. Instead, multiple caretakers are the norm: spouses, children, other relatives, and neighbors.[37] Reciprocity is the key to human social life and to

37. [38]

survival in small-scale societies, and reciprocal child care is but one example of such reciprocity. Children and infants accompany their mothers (or fathers) on gathering trips, as among the !Kung San, and on Aka collective net-hunting expeditions. Agta women carry nursing infants with them when gathering-hunting, leaving older children at home in the care of spouses or other relatives.[39]

In pre-industrial horticultural and agricultural societies, having children and "working" are not incompatible—quite the opposite! Anthropologists long ago identified "female farming systems," especially in parts of Africa and Southeast Asia, in which farming is predominantly a woman's job and men "help out" as needed.[41]

In most agricultural societies, women who do not come from high-status or wealthy families perform a significant amount of agricultural labor, though it often goes unrecognized in the dominant gender ideology. Wet-rice agriculture, common in south and southeast Asia, is labor-intensive, particularly weeding and transplanting rice seedlings, which are often done by women (Figure 10). Harvesting rice, wheat, and other grains also entails essential input by women. Yet the Indian Census traditionally records only male family members as "farmers." In the United States, women's work on family-owned farms is often invisible.[43]

Women may accommodate their reproductive and child-rearing roles by engaging in work that is more compatible with child care, such as cooking, and in activities that occur closer to home and are interruptible and perhaps less dangerous, though cooking fires,

38. [61]
39. [40]
40. [62]
41. [42]
42. [63]
43. [44]
44. [64]

stoves, and implements such as knives certainly can cause harm![45] More often, women adjust their food-getting "work" in response to the demands of pregnancy, breast-feeding, and other child care activities. They gather or process nuts while their children are napping; they take their children with them to the fields to weed or harvest and, in more recent times, to urban construction sites in places such as India, where women often do the heaviest (and lowest-paid) work.

In the United States, despite a long-standing cultural model of the stay-at-home mom, some mothers have always worked outside the home, mainly out of economic necessity. This shifting group includes single-divorced-widowed mothers and married African-Americans (pre- and post-slavery), immigrants, and Euro-American women with limited financial resources. But workplace policies (except during World War II) have historically made it harder rather than easier for women (and men) to carry out family responsibilities, including requiring married women and pregnant women to quit their jobs.[47] Circumstances have not improved much. While pregnant women in the United States are no longer automatically dismissed from their jobs—at least not legally—the United States lags far behind most European countries in providing affordable child care and paid parental leave.

45. [46]
46. [65]
47. [48]
48. [66]

FAMILY AND MARRIAGE: A CULTURAL CONSTRUCT AND SOCIAL INVENTION

Unraveling the theory of the hunting-way-of-life scenario, especially female dependence on males, undermines the "naturalness" of the nuclear family with its male-provider-protector and female-domestic-child-care division of labor. More than one hundred years of cross-cultural research has revealed the varied forms humans have invented for "partnering"—living in households, raising children, establishing long-term relationships, transmitting valuables to offspring, and other social behaviors associated with "family." Once again, the universality and evolutionary origins of the U.S. form of the human family is more fiction than fact, a projection of our cultural model of family and gender roles onto the past and onto the entire human species.

Family: Biology and Culture

What **is** natural about the family? Like gender and sexuality, there is a biological component. There is a biological mother and a biological father, although the mother plays a significantly larger and longer role from the time of conception through the end of infant's dependence. In the past, conception usually required sexual intercourse, but that is no longer the case thanks to sperm banks, which have made the embodied male potentially obsolete, biologically speaking. There is also a biological relationship between parents and offspring—again, more obvious in the case of the mother since the baby develops in and emerges from her body. Nevertheless, DNA and genes are real and influence the traits and potentialities of the next generation.

Beyond those biological "realities," culture and society seem to take over, building on—or ignoring—biology. We all know there are

biological fathers who may be unaware of or not concerned about their biological offspring and not involved in their care and biological mothers who, after giving birth, give up their children through adoption or to other family members. In recent decades, technology has allowed women to act as "surrogate mothers," using their bodies as carriers for implanted fertilized eggs of couples who wish to have a child. On the other hand, we all probably know of excellent parents who are not the children's biological mothers and fathers, and "legal" parenthood through adoption can have more-profound parenting consequences for children than biological parenthood.

When we think of good (or bad) parents, or of someone as a really "good mother," as an "excellent father," as two "wonderful mothers," we are not talking biology. We usually are thinking of a set of cultural and behavioral expectations, and being an adoptive rather than a biological parent isn't really the issue. Clearly, then, parenthood, mother-father relationships, and other kinship relationships (with siblings, grandparents, and uncles-aunts) are not simply rooted in biology but are also social roles, legal relationships, meanings and expectations constructed by human cultures in specific social and historical contexts. This is not to deny the importance of kinship; it is fundamental, especially in small-scale pre-industrial societies. But kinship is as much about culture as it is about biology. Biology, in a sense, is only the beginning—and may not be necessary.

Marriage also is not "natural." It is a cultural invention that involves various meanings and functions in different cultural contexts. We all know that it is not necessary to be married to have sex or to have children. Indeed, in the United States, a growing number of women who give birth are not married, and the percent of unmarried women giving birth is higher in many northwestern European countries such as Sweden.[49] Cross-culturally, marriage

49. [50]

seems to be primarily about societal regulation of relationships—a social contract between two individuals and, often, their families, that specifies rights and obligations of married individuals and of the offspring that married women produce. Some anthropologists have argued that marriage IS primarily about children and "descent"—who will "own" children.[51] To whom will they belong? With what rights, obligations, social statuses, access to resources, group identities, and all the other assets—and liabilities—that exist within a society? Children have historically been essential for family survival—for literal reproduction and for social reproduction.

Think, for a moment, about our taken-for-granted assumptions about to whom children belong.[53] Clearly, children emerge from a woman's body and, indeed, after approximately nine months, it is her body that has nurtured and "grown" this child. But who "owns" that child legally—to whom it "belongs" and the beliefs associated with how it was conceived and about who played a role in its conception—is not a biological given. Not in human societies. One fascinating puzzle in human evolution is how females lost control over their sexuality and their offspring! Why do so many, though not all, cultural theories of procreation consider women's role as minor, if not irrelevant—not as the "seed," for example, but merely as a "carrier" of the male seed she will eventually "deliver" to its "owner"? Thus, having a child biologically is not equivalent to social "ownership." Marriage, cross-culturally, deals with social ownership of offspring. What conditions must be met? What exchanges must occur, particularly between families or kinship groups, for that offspring to be theirs, his, hers—for it to be a legitimate "heir"?

50. [67]
51. [52]
52. [68]
53. [54]
54. [69]

Marriage is, then, a "contract," usually between families, even if unwritten. Throughout most of human history, kinship groups and, later, religious institutions have regulated marriage. Most major religions today have formal laws and marriage "contracts," even in societies with "civil" marriage codes. In some countries, like India, there is a separate marriage code for each major religion in addition to a secular, civil marriage code. Who children "belong to" is rarely solely about biology, and when biology is involved, it is biology shaped by society and culture. The notion of an "illegitimate" child in the United States has not been about biology but about "legitimacy," that is, whether the child was the result of a legally recognized relationship that entitled offspring to certain rights, including inheritance.

From this perspective, what we think of as a "normal" or "natural" family in the United States is actually a culturally and historically specific, legally codified set of relationships between two individuals and, to some extent, their families. Cross-culturally, the U.S. (and "traditional" British-Euro-American) nuclear family is quite unusual and atypical. Married couples in the United States "ideally" establish a separate household, a nuclear-family-based household, rather than living with one spouse's parents and forming a larger multi-generational household, often referred to as an "extended" family, which is the most common form of family structure. In addition, U.S. marriages are monogamous—legally, one may have only one husband or wife at a time. But a majority of societies that have been studied by anthropologists have allowed polygamy (multiple spouses). Polygyny (one husband, multiple wives) is most common but polyandry (one wife, multiple husbands) also occurs; occasionally marriages involve multiple husbands and multiple wives. Separate spouses, particularly wives, often have their own dwelling space, commonly shared with their children, but usually live in one compound, with their husbands' parents and his relatives. Across cultures, then, most households tend to be versions of extended-family-based groups.

These two contrasts alone lead to families in the United States

that are smaller and focused more on the husband-wife (or spousal) and parent-child relationships; other relatives are more distant, literally and often conceptually. They are also more "independent"—or, some would say, more dependent on a smaller set of relationships to fulfill family responsibilities for work, child care, finances, emotional companionship, and even sexual obligations. Other things being equal, the death or loss of a spouse in a "traditional" U.S. family has a bigger impact than such a loss in an extended family household (see Text Box 1). On the other hand, nuclear families own and control their incomes and other assets, unlike many extended families in which those are jointly held. This ownership and control of resources can give couples and wives in nuclear families greater freedom.

There are other cross-cultural variations in family, marriage and kinship: in expectations for spouses and children, exchanges between families, inheritance rules, marriage rituals, ideal ages and characteristics of spouses, conditions for dissolving a marriage and remarriage after a spouse's death, attitudes about premarital, extra-marital, and marital sexuality, and so forth. How "descent" is calculated is a social-cultural process that carves out a smaller "group" of "kin" from all of the potential relatives in which individuals have rights (e.g., to property, assistance, political representation) and obligations (economic, social). Often there are explicit norms about who one should and should not marry, including which relatives. Marriage between people we call "cousins" is common cross-culturally. These variations in the definition of marriage and family reflect what human cultures do with the biological "facts of life," creating many different kinds of marriage, family, and kinship systems.

Another major contrast between the U.S. and many other cultures is that our husband-wife relationship is based on free choice and "romantic love." Marriages are arranged by the couple and reflect their desires rather than the desires of larger societal groups. Of course, even in the United States, that has never been entirely the case. Informal prohibitions, often imposed by families, have shaped

(and continue to shape) individual choices, such as marrying outside one's religion, racial/ethnic group, and socio-economic class or within one's gender. Some religions explicitly forbid marrying someone from another religion. But U.S. formal government prohibitions have also existed, such as laws against inter-racial marriage, which were only declared unconstitutional in 1967 (Loving v. Virginia).

These so-called anti-miscegenation laws, directed mainly at European-American and African-Americans, were designed to preserve the race-based system of social stratification in the United States.[55] They did not affect both genders equally but reflected the intersection of gender with class and racial inequality. During slavery, most inter-racial sexual activity was initiated by Euro-American males. It was not uncommon for male slave owners to have illicit, often forced sexual relations with female slaves. The laws were created so that children of slave women inherited their mother's racial and slave status, thereby also adding to the slave property of the "father."

Euro-American women's relationships with African-American men, though far less frequent and usually voluntary, posed special problems. Offspring would inherit the mother's "free" status and increase the free African-American population or possibly end up "passing" as "White." Social and legal weapons were used to prevent such relationships. Euro-American women, especially poorer women, who were involved sexually with African-American men were stereotyped as prostitutes, sexually depraved, and outcasts. Laws were passed that fined them for such behavior or required them to work as indentured servants for the child's father's slave owner; other laws prohibited cohabitation between a "White" and someone of African descent.

Post-slavery anti-miscegenation laws tried to preserve the "color

55. [56]

56. [70]

line" biologically by outlawing mating and to maintain the legal "purity" and status of Euro-American lineages by outlawing inter-racial marriage. In reality, of course, inter-racial mating continued, but inter-racial offspring did not have the rights of "legitimate" children. By the 1920s, some states, like Virginia, had outlawed "Whites" from marrying anyone who had a "single drop" of African blood. By 1924, 38 states had outlawed Black-White marriages, and as late as the 1950s, inter-racial marriage bans existed in almost half of the states and had been extended to Native Americans, Mexicans, "East Indians," Malays, and other groups designated "not White."[57]

Overall, stratified inegalitarian societies tend to have the strictest controls over marriage. Such control is especially common when some groups are considered inherently superior to others, be it racially, castes, or "royal" blood. Patriarchal societies closely regulate and restrict premarital sexual contacts of women, especially higher-status women. One function of marriage in these societies is to reproduce the existing social structure, partially by insuring that marriages and any offspring resulting from them will maintain and potentially increase the social standing of the families involved. Elite, dominant groups have the most to lose in terms of status and wealth, including inheritances. "Royalty" in Britain, for example, traditionally are not supposed to marry "commoners" so as to ensure that the royal "blood," titles, and other privileges remain in the "royal" family.

Cross-culturally, even in small-scale societies that are relatively egalitarian such as the San and the Trobriand Islanders studied by Annette Weiner, marriage is rarely a purely individual choice left to the wishes—and whims of, or "electricity" between—the two spouses.[59] This is not to say that spouses never have input or prior

57. [58]
58. [71]
59. [60]

contact; they may know each other and even have grown up together. In most societies, however, a marriage usually has profound social consequences and is far too important to be "simply" an individual choice. Since marriages affect families and kin economically, socially, and politically, family members (especially elders) play a major role in arranging marriages along lines consistent with their own goals and using their own criteria. Families sometimes arrange their children's marriages when the children are quite young. In Nuosu communities of southwest China, some families held formal engagement ceremonies for babies to, ideally, cement a good cross-cousin partnership, though no marital relationship would occur until much later.[61] There also can be conventional categories of relatives who are supposed to marry each other so young girls might know that their future husbands will be particular cousins, and the girls might play or interact with them at family functions as children.[63]

This does not mean that romantic love is purely a recent or U.S. and European phenomenon. Romantic love is widespread even in cultures that have strong views on arranging marriages. Traditional cultures in India, both Hindu and Muslim, are filled with "love stories" expressed in songs, paintings, and famous temple sculptures. One of the most beautiful buildings in the world, the Taj Mahal, is a monument to Shah Jahan's love for his wife. Where young girls' marriages are arranged, often to older men (as among the Maasai), we know that those girls, once married, sometimes take "lovers" about whom they sing "love songs" and with whom they

60. [72]
61. [62]
62. [73]
63. [64]
64. [74]

engage in sexual relations.[65] Truly, romantic love, sex, and marriage can exist independently.

Nevertheless, cross-culturally and historically, marriages based on free choice and romantic love are relatively unusual and recent. Clearly, young people all over the world are attracted to the idea, which is "romanticized" in Bollywood films, popular music, poetry, and other forms of contemporary popular culture. No wonder so many families—and conservative social and religious groups—are concerned, if not terrified, of losing control over young people's mating and marriage behavior (see, for example, the excellent PBS documentary *The World before Her*).[67] A social revolution is truly underway and we haven't even gotten to same-sex sex and same-sex marriage.

What Can We Learn from the Na? Shattering Ideas about Family and Relationships

By Tami Blumenfield

We have certain expectations about the trajectories of relationships and family life in the United States—young people meet, fall in love, purchase a diamond, and then marry. To some extent, this specific view of family is changing as same-sex relationships and no-longer-new reproductive technologies expand our views of what family can and cannot be. Still, quite often, we think

65. [66]

66. [75]

67. [68]

68. [76]

about family in a rigid, heteronormative context, assuming that everyone wants the same thing.What if we think about family in an entirely different way? In fact, many people already do. In 2014, 10 percent of American adults lived in cohabitating relationships. Meanwhile, 51 percent were married in state-endorsed relationships, and that percentage has been dropping fast.[69] Those numbers may sound familiar as part of politicians' "focus on the family," decrying the number of children born to unmarried parents and bemoaning the weakening of an institution they hold dear (even though their colleagues are frequently exposed in the news for sexual indiscretions).It is true that adults with limited resources face challenges raising children when they have limited access to affordable, high-quality child care. They struggle when living wage jobs migrate to other countries or other states where workers earn less. In an economic system that encourages concentration of resources in a tiny fraction of the population, it is no wonder that they struggle. But is the institution of marriage really to blame? The number of cohabitating unmarried individuals is high in many parts of Europe as well, but with better support structures in place, parents fare much better. They enjoy parental leave policies that mandate their jobs be held for them upon return from leave. They also benefit from strong educational systems and state-subsidized child care,

69. [70]

70. [77]

and their children enjoy better outcomes than ours.Critics see the "focus on the family" by U.S. politicians as a convenient political trick that turns attention away from crucial policy issues and refocuses it on the plight of the institution of marriage and the fate of the nation's children. Few people can easily dismiss these concerns, even if they do not reflect their own lived realities. And besides, the family model trumpeted by politicians as lost is but one form of family that is not universal even in the United States, much less among all human groups, as sociologist Stephanie Coontz convincingly argued in books including *The Way We Never Were* (1992) and *The Way We Really Are* (1997).

In fact, the "focus on family" ignores the diverse ways peoples on this continent have organized their relationships. For Hopi, a Native American group living in what is today the southwestern United States, for example, it is their mother's kin rather than their husbands' from whom they draw support. The Navajo, Kiowa, and Iroquois Native American cultures all organize their family units and arrange their relationships differently.Na people living in the foothills of the Himalayas have many ways to structure family relationships. One relationship structure looks like what we might expect in a place where people make their living from the land and raise livestock to sustain themselves. Young adults marry, and brides sometimes moves into the husband's childhood home and live with his parents. They have children, who live with them, and they work together. A second Na family structure looks much less familiar: young adults live in large, extended

family households with several generations and form romantic relationships with someone from another household. When they are ready, the young man seeks permission to spend the night in the young woman's room. If both parties desire, their relationship can evolve into a long-term one, but they do not marry and do not live together in the same household. When a child is conceived, or before if the couple chooses, their relationship moves from a secretive one to one about which others know. Even so, the young man rarely spends daylight hours with his partner. Instead, he returns to his own family's home to help with farming and other work there. The state is not involved in their relationship, and their money is not pooled either, though presents change hands. If either partner becomes disenchanted with the other, the relationship need not persist. Their children remain in the mother's home, nurtured by adults who love them deeply—not just by their mothers but also by their grandmothers, maternal aunts, maternal uncles, and often older cousins as well. They enjoy everyday life with an extended family (Figure 18). The third Na family structure mixes the preceding two systems. Someone joins a larger household as a spouse. Perhaps the family lacked enough women or men to manage the household and farming tasks adequately or the couple faced pressure from the government to marry.



Na grandmother with her maternal grandchildren. They live in the same household, along with the grandmother's adult sons and her daughter, the children's mother. Photograph by Tami Blumenfield, 2002.

As an anthropologist who has done fieldwork in Na communities since 2001, I can attest to the loving and nurturing families their system encourages. It protects adults as well as children. Women who are suffering in a relationship can end it with limited consequences for their children, who do not need to relocate to a new house and adjust to a new lifestyle. Lawyers need not get involved, as they often must in divorce cases elsewhere in the world. A man who cannot afford to build a new house for his family—a significant pressure for people in many areas of China that prevents young

men from marrying or delays their marriages—can still enjoy a relationship or can choose, instead, to devote himself to his role as an uncle. Women and men who do not feel the urge to pursue romantic lives are protected in this system as well; they can contribute to their natal families without having to worry that no one will look out for them as they age.

Like any system composed of real people, Na systems are not perfect, and neither are the people who represent them. In the last few decades, people have flocked to Lugu Lake hoping to catch a glimpse of this unusual society, and many tourists and tour guides have mistakenly taken Na flexibility in relationships as signifying a land of casual sex with no recognition of paternity. These are highly problematic assumptions that offend my Na acquaintances deeply. Na people have fathers and know who they are, and they often enjoy close relationships despite living apart. In fact, fathers are deeply involved in children's lives and often participate in everyday child-rearing activities. Of course, as in other parts of the world, some fathers participate more than others. Fathers and their birth families also take responsibility for contributing to school expenses and make other financial contributions as circumstances permit. Clearly, this is not a community in which men do not fulfill responsibilities as fathers. It is one in which the responsibilities and how they are fulfilled varies markedly from those of fathers living in other places and cultures.

Though problems exist in Na communities and their relationship patterns are already changing and

transforming them, it is encouraging that so many people can live satisfied lives in this flexible system. The Na shatter our expectations about how families and relationships should be organized. They also inspire us to ask whether we can, and should, adapt part of their ethos into our own society.[71]

For more information, see the TEDx FurmanU presentation by Tami Blumenfield

MALE DOMINANCE: UNIVERSAL AND BIOLOGICALLY ROOTED?

Unraveling the myth of the hunting way of life and women's dependence on male hunting undermined the logic behind the argument for biologically rooted male dominance. Still, for feminist scholars, the question of male dominance remained important. Was it universal, "natural," inevitable, and unalterable? Were some societies gender-egalitarian? Was gender inequality a cultural phenomenon, a product of culturally and historically specific conditions?

Research in the 1970s and 1980s addressed these questions.[73] Some argued that "sexual asymmetry" was universal

71. [72]
72. [78]
73. [74]
74. [79]

and resulted from complex cultural processes related to women's reproductive roles.[75] Others presented evidence of gender equality in small-scale societies (such as the !Kung San and Native American Iroquois) but argued that it had disappeared with the rise of private property and "the state."[77] Still others focused on evaluating the "status of women" using multiple "variables" or identifying "key determinants" (e.g., economic, political, ecological, social, and cultural) of women's status."[79] By the late 1980s, scholars realized how difficult it was to define, much less measure, male dominance across cultures and even the "status of women" in one culture.

Think of our own society or the area in which you live. How would you go about assessing the "status of women" to determine whether it is male-dominated? What would you examine? What information would you gather and from whom? What difficulties might you encounter when making a judgment? Might men and women have different views? Then imagine trying to compare the status of women in your region to the status of women in, let's say, the Philippines, Japan, or China or in a kin-based, small society like that of the Minangkabau living in Indonesia and the !Kung San in Botswana. Next, how might Martians, upon arriving in your city, decide whether you live in a "male dominated" culture? What would they notice? What would they have difficulty deciphering? This experiment gives you an idea of what anthropologists confronted—except they were trying to include all societies that ever existed. Many were accessible only through archaeological and paleontological evidence or through historical records, often made

75. [76]
76. [80]
77. [78]
78. [81]
79. [80]
80. [82]

by travelers, sailors, or missionaries. Surviving small-scale cultures were surrounded by more-powerful societies that often imposed their cultures and gender ideologies on those under their control.

For example, the !Kung San of Southern Africa when studied by anthropologists, had already been pushed by European colonial rulers into marginal areas. Most were living on "reserves" similar to Indian reservations in the United States. Others lived in market towns and were sometimes involved in the tourist industry and in films such as the ethnographically flawed and ethnocentric film *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1980). !Kung San women at the time were learning European Christian ideas about sexuality, clothing, and covering their breasts, and children were attending missionary-established schools, which taught the church's and European views of gender and spousal roles along with the Bible, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary. During the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, the South African military tried to recruit San to fight against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), taunting reluctant !Kung San men by calling them "chicken" and assuming, erroneously, that the !Kung San shared their "tough guys / tough guise" version of masculinity.[81]

Given the complexity of evaluating "universal male dominance," scholars abandoned the search for simple "global" answers, for key "determinants" of women's status that would apply to all societies. A 1988 *Annual Review of Anthropology* article by Mukhopadhyay and Higgins concluded that "One of the profound realizations of the past ten years is that the original questions, still unanswerable, may be both naive and inappropriate."[83] Among other things, the concept of "status" contains at least five separate, potentially independent

81. [82]
82. [83]
83. [84]
84. [84]

components: economics, power/authority, prestige, autonomy, and gender ideologies/beliefs. One's life-cycle stage, kinship role, class, and other socio-economic and social-identity variables affect one's gender status. Thus, even within a single culture, women's lives are not uniform.[85]

New Directions in the Anthropology of Gender

More-recent research has been focused on improving the ethnographic and archaeological record and re-examining old material. Some have turned from cause-effect relations to better understanding how gender systems work and focusing on a single culture or cultural region. Others have explored a single topic, such as menstrual blood and cultural concepts of masculinity and infertility across cultures.[87]

Many American anthropologists "returned home," looking with fresh eyes at the diversity of women's lives in their own society: working-class women, immigrant women, women of various ethnic and racial groups, and women in different geographic regions and occupations.[89] Some ethnographers, for example, immersed themselves in the abortion debates, conducting fieldwork to understand the perspective and logic behind pro-choice and anti-choice activists in North Dakota. Others headed to college campuses, studying the "culture of romance" or fraternity gang

85. [86]
86. [85]
87. [88]
88. [86]
89. [90]
90. [87]

rape.[91] Peggy Sanday's work on sexual coercion, including her cross-cultural study of rape-prone societies, was followed by other studies of power-coercion-gender relationships, such as using new reproductive technologies for selecting the sex of children.[93]

Many previously unexplored areas such as the discourse around reproduction, representations of women in medical professions, images in popular culture, and international development policies (which had virtually ignored gender) came under critical scrutiny.[95] Others worked on identifying complex local factors and processes that produce particular configurations of gender and gender relations, such as the patrifocal (male-focused) cultural model of family in many parts of India.[97] Sexuality studies expanded, challenging existing binary paradigms, making visible the lives of lesbian mothers and other traditionally marginalized sexualities and identities.[99]

The past virtual invisibility of women in archaeology disappeared as a host of new studies was published, often by feminist anthropologists, including a pioneering volume by Joan Gero and Margaret Conkey, *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*. That book gave rise to a multi-volume series specifically on gender and archaeology edited by Sarah Nelson. Everything from divisions

91. [92]
92. [88]
93. [94]
94. [89]
95. [96]
96. [90]
97. [98]
98. [91]
99. [100]
100. [92]

of labor to power relations to sexuality could be scrutinized in the archaeological record.[101]

Some anthropologists argued that there are recurring patterns despite the complexity and variability of human gender systems. One is the impact of women's economic contributions on their power, prestige, and autonomy.[103] Women's work, alone, does not necessarily give them control or ownership of what they produce. It is not always valued and does not necessarily lead to political power. Women in many cultures engage in agricultural labor, but the fields are often owned and controlled by their husbands' families or by a landlord, as in many parts of India and Iran.[105] The women have little authority, prestige, or autonomy.[107] Many foraging and some horticultural societies, on the other hand, recognize women's economic and reproductive contributions, and that recognition may reflect relative equality in other spheres as well, including sexuality. Gender relations seem more egalitarian, overall, in small-scale societies such as the San, Trobrianders, and Na, in part because they are kinship-based, often with relatively few valuable resources that can be accumulated; those that exist are communally owned, usually by kinship groups in which both women and men have rights.

Another factor in gender equality is the social environment. Positive social relations—an absence of constant hostility or warfare

101. [102]
102. [93]
103. [104]
104. [94]
105. [106]
106. [95]
107. [108]
108. [96]

with neighbors—seems to be correlated with relatively egalitarian gender relations. In contrast, militarized societies—whether small-scale horticultural groups like the Sambia who perceive their neighbors as potential enemies or large-scale stratified societies with formal military organizations and vast empires—seem to benefit men more than women overall.[109] Warrior societies culturally value men's roles, and warfare gives men access to economic and political resources.

As to old stereotypes about why men are warriors, there may be another explanation. From a reproductive standpoint, men are far more expendable than women, especially women of reproductive age.[111] While this theme has not yet been taken up by many anthropologists, male roles in warfare could be more about expendability than supposed greater male strength, aggressiveness, or courage. One can ask why it has taken so long for women in the United States to be allowed to fly combat missions? Certainly it is not about women not being strong enough to carry the plane.[113]

Patriarchy . . . But What about Matriarchy?

The rise of stratified agriculture-intensive centralized "states" has tended to produce transformations in gender relations and gender ideologies that some have called patriarchy, a male-dominated political and authority structure and an ideology that privileges

109. [110]
110. [97]
111. [112]
112. [98]
113. [114]
114. [99]

males over females overall and in every strata of society. Gender intersects with class and, often, with religion, caste, and ethnicity. So, while there could be powerful queens, males took precedence over females within royal families, and while upper-class Brahmin women in India could have male servants, they had far fewer formal assets, power, and rights than their brothers and husbands. Also, as noted earlier, families strictly controlled their movements, interactions with males, "social reputations," and marriages. Similarly, while twentieth-century British colonial women in British-controlled India had power over some Indian men, they still could not vote, hold high political office, control their own fertility or sexuality, or exercise other rights available to their male counterparts.[115] Of course, poor lower-class lower-caste Indian women were (and still are) the most vulnerable and mistreated in India, more so overall than their brothers, husbands, fathers, or sons.

On the other hand, we have yet to find any "matriarchies," that is, female-dominated societies in which the extent and range of women's power, authority, status, and privilege parallels men's in patriarchal societies. In the twentieth century, some anthropologists at first confused "matriarchy" with matrilineal. In matrilineal societies, descent or membership in a kinship group is transmitted from mothers to their children (male and female) and then, through daughters, to their children, and so forth (as in many Na families). Matrilineal societies create woman-centered kinship groups in which having daughters is often more important to "continuing the line" than having sons, and living arrangements after marriage often center around related women in a matrilocal extended family household (See Text Box 1, What Can We Learn from the Na?). Female sexuality may become less regulated since it is the mother who carries the "seed" of the

115. [116]

116. [100]

lineage. In this sense, it is the reverse of the kinds of patrilineal, patrilocal, patrifocal male-oriented kinship groups and households one finds in many patriarchal societies. Peggy Sanday suggested, on these and other grounds, that the Minangkabau, a major ethnic group in Indonesia, is a matriarchy.[117]

Ethnographic data have shown that males, especially as members of matrilineages, can be powerful in matrilineal societies. Warfare, as previously mentioned, along with political and social stratification can alter gender dynamics. The Nayar (in Kerala, India), the Minangkabau, and the Na are matrilineal societies embedded in, or influenced by, dominant cultures and patriarchal religions such as Islam and Hinduism. The society of the Na in China is also matrifocal in some ways. Thus, the larger context, including contemporary global processes, can undermine women's power and status.[119] At the same time, though, many societies are clearly matrifocal, are relatively female-centered, and do not have the kinds of gender ideologies and systems found in most patriarchal societies.[121]

Does Black Matriarchy Exist in Brazil? Histories of Slavery and African Cultural Survivals in Afro-

117. [118]
118. [101]
119. [120]
120. [102]
121. [122]
122. [103]

Brazilian Religion

By Abby Gondek

Candomblé is an Afro-Brazilian spirit possession religion in which Yoruba (West African) deities called *orixás* are honored at religious sites called *terreiros* where the Candomblé priestesses (*mães do santo*) and their "daughters" (*filhas do santo*) live. One of the central "hubs" of Candomblé worship in Brazil is the northeastern state of Bahia, where Afro-Brazilians make up more than 80 percent of the population in the capital city, Salvador. Brazil's geography is perceived through the lenses of race and class since Bahia, a majority Afro-Brazilian state, is viewed as underdeveloped, backward, and poor relative to the whiter and wealthier Southern region.[123]In the 1930s, a

Jewish female anthropologist Ruth Landes provided a different perspective about Bahia, one that emphasized black women's communal power. During the time in which Landes conducted her research, the Brazilian police persecuted Candomblé communities for "harboring communists." The Brazilian government was linked with Nazism, torture, rape, and racism, and Afro-Brazilians resisted this oppression.[125] Also during this

123. [124]

124. [104]

125. [126]

126. [105]

period, debate began among social scientists about whether Candomblé was a matriarchal religion in which women were the primary spiritual leaders. The debate was rooted in the question of where "black matriarchy" came from. Was it a result of the history of slavery or was it an African "cultural survival"? The debate was simultaneously about the power and importance of Afro-Brazilian women in spiritual and cultural life.

On one side of the debate was E. Franklin Frazier, an African-American sociologist trained at University of Chicago, who maintained that Candomblé and the lack of legal marriage gave women their important position in Bahia. He believed that black women had been matriarchal authorities since the slavery period and described them as defiant and self-reliant. On the other side of the debate was Jewish anthropologist Melville Herskovits, who was trained by German immigrant Franz Boas at Columbia University. Herskovits believed that black women's economic roles demonstrated African cultural survivals, but downplayed the priestesses' importance in Candomblé.[127] Herskovits portrayed patriarchy rather than matriarchy as the central organizing principle in Bahia. He argued that African cultural survivals in Brazil came from the patrilineal practices of Dahomey and Yoruba in West Africa and portrayed Bahian communities as male-

127. [128]

128. [106]

centered with wives and "concubines" catering to men and battling each other for male attention.

Ruth Landes and her work triggered the debate about "black matriarchy" in Bahia. Landes had studied with anthropologists Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict at Columbia University. She began her studies of Candomblé in 1938 in Salvador, Bahia, working with her research partner, guide, and significant other, Edison Carneiro, a scholar of Afro-Brazilian studies and journalist, resulting in publication in 1947 of *The City of Women*.[129] Landes contended that Afro-Brazilian women were the powerful matriarchal leaders of *terreiros* de Candomblé. She called them matriarchal because she argued that their leadership was "made up almost exclusively of women and, in any case controlled by women."[131] Landes claimed that the women provided spiritual advice and sexual relationships in exchange for financial support from male patrons of the *terreiros*. She also explained that newer *caboclo* houses (in which indigenous spirits were worshipped in addition to Yoruba spirits) had less-stringent guidelines and allowed men to become priests and dance for the gods, actions considered taboo in the Yoruba tradition. Landes elaborated that these men were primarily "passive"

129. [130]

130. [107]

131. [132]

132. [108]

homosexuals. She looked down on this "modern" development, which she viewed as detracting from the supposedly "pure" woman-centered Yoruba (West African) practices.[133]Even Landes' (controversial) argument about homosexuality was part of her claim about matriarchy; she contended that the homosexual men who became *pais do santo* ("fathers of the saint," or Candomblé priests) had previously been "outcasts"—prostitutes and vagrants who were hounded by the police. By becoming like the "mothers" and acting as women, they could gain status and respect. Landes was strongly influenced by both Edison Carneiro's opinion and the convictions of Martiniano Eliseu do Bonfim (a revered *babalaô* or "father of the secrets") and the women priestesses of the traditional houses (*Gantois*, *Casa Branca*, and *Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá*) with whom she spent the majority of her time.

Thus, her writings likely represent the views of her primary informants, making her work unique; at that time, anthropologists (ethnocentrically) considered themselves more knowledgeable about the cultures they studied than the people in those cultures.Landes incorporated ideas from the pre-Brazil research of E. Franklin Frazier and Melville Herskovits to contend that the existence of the matriarchy in Bahia rested on women's economic positions, sexuality, and capacities, which were influenced by (1) white slave owners'

133. [134]

134. [109]

preference for black women as heads of families and the inculcation of leadership traits in black women and not black men and (2) the history of women's roles as property owners, market sellers, priestesses, and warriors in West Africa.[135]Landes' findings continue to be critiqued in contemporary academic contexts because some scholars disagree with her matriarchy thesis and her views about homosexual *pais* and *filhos do santo*. J. Lorand Matory, director of African and African-American research at Duke University, has taken one of the strongest positions against Landes, arguing that she altered the evidence to argue for the existence of the "*cult matriarchate*." Matory believes that her division between "new" and "traditional" houses is a false one and that men traditionally were the leaders in Candomblé. In fact, Matory contends that, at the time of Landes' research, more men than women were acting as priests.[137] In contrast, Cheryl Sterling sees Landes' *The City of Women* as "still relevant today as the first feminist account of Candomblé" and maintains that Candomblé is a space in which Afro-Brazilian women are the "supreme authority" and that the *terreiro* is an enclave of "female power." The Brazilian state stereotypes black women as socially pathological with "unstable" family structures, making them "sub-citizens,"

135. [136]

136. [110]

137. [138]

138. [111]

but Sterling argues that Candomblé is a space in which female blackness prevails.[139]

Has Civilization "Advanced" Women's Position?

Ironically, some nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers and social scientists, such as Herbert Spencer, have argued that women's positions "advanced" with civilization, especially under European influence, at least relative to so-called "primitive" societies. The picture is complicated, but the opposite may actually be true. Most anthropological studies have suggested that "civilization," "colonialism," "development," and "globalization" have been mixed blessings for women.[141] Their traditional workloads tend to increase while they are simultaneously excluded from new opportunities in agricultural cash crops, trading, and technology. Sometimes they lose traditional rights (e.g., to property) within extended family kinship groups or experience increased pressure from men to be the upholders of cultural traditions, whether in clothing or marriage practices. On the other hand, new political, economic, and educational opportunities can open up for women, allowing them not only to contribute to their families but to delay

139. [140]
140. [112]
141. [142]
142. [113]

marriage, pursue alternatives to marriage, and, if they marry, to have a more powerful voice in their marriages.[143]

Deeply embedded cultural-origin stories are extremely powerful, difficult to unravel, and can persist despite contradictory evidence, in part because of their familiarity. They resemble what people have seen and experienced throughout their lifetimes, even in the twenty-first century, despite all the changes. Yet, nineteenth and twentieth century cultural models are also continuously reinforced and reproduced in every generation through powerful devices: children's stories; rituals like Valentine's Day; fashion, advertisements, music, video games, and popular culture generally; and in financial, political, legal, and military institutions and leaders. But profound transformations can produce a "backlash," as in U.S. movements to restore "traditional" family forms, "traditional" male and female roles, sexual abstinence-virginity, and the "sanctity" of heterosexual marriage.[145] Some would argue that backlash elements were at work in the 2016 Presidential and Congressional elections.

Cultural origin stories also persist because they are legitimizing ideologies—complex belief systems often developed by those in power to rationalize, explain, and perpetuate systems of inequality. The hunting-way-of-life theory of human evolution, for example, both naturalizes and essentializes male dominance and other gender-related traits and provides an origin story and a legitimizing ideology for the "traditional" U.S. nuclear family as "fundamental to human social organization and life." It also can be used to justify "spousal rape" and domestic violence, treating both as private family matters and, in the past, as male "rights." Not surprisingly, elements

143. [144]
144. [114]
145. [146]
146. [115]

of the traditional nuclear family model appear in the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court case that legalized same-sex marriage, especially in the dissenting views. And cultural models of gender and family played a role in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election.

Gender and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

By Carol C. Mukhopadhyay

The 2016 presidential election was gender precedent-setting in ways that will take decades to analyze (see for example Gail Collins). For the first time, a major U.S. political party chose a woman as its presidential candidate. And while Hillary Rodham Clinton did not win the electoral college, she won the popular vote, the first woman to do so, and by nearly three million votes. As a cultural anthropologist who has long studied women and politics, I offer a few preliminary observations on the role of gender in the 2016 presidential election.[147]

Women on the Political Leadership Stage

From a positive perspective, for the first time, two women (Republican Carly Fiorina and Democrat Hillary Clinton) participated in televised presidential primary debates and one went on to the "finals." Millions of people, including children, saw articulate, accomplished,

147. [148]

148. [116]

powerful women competing with men to be "Commander-in-Chief." During the 2016 Democratic National Convention, the country watched a major political party and key male leaders celebrate the life and professional and leadership-relevant achievements of a woman, its presidential nominee. The role-modeling impacts are enormous—and, one hopes, long-lasting.

The Gendered White House Family

The 2016 presidential campaign challenged, at least momentarily, the traditional, taken-for-granted, gendered institution of the White House first "family." What if the president's spouse were male? This would wreck havoc with the conventional "first lady" role! Traditionally, the spouse, even if highly educated, becomes the "help mate" and "listener," handles "domestic affairs," organizes and attends important social occasions, and works on gender-appropriate projects such as children's health. Hillary Clinton was roundly criticized, as first lady, for venturing beyond the "domestic sphere" and pursuing health care reform in Bill Clinton's administration even though she had indisputably relevant professional expertise. Michelle Obama, with her Harvard law degree and prior career as a lawyer, became best known as "First Mom" and a "fashion-setter" whose clothing was discussed and emulated. While she was a very positive role model, especially for African-Americans, and developed major initiatives to combat childhood obesity and promote fresh food, she did not challenge *gender conventions*.

How many girls remember her professional credentials and achievements?

Had Hillary Clinton won, the need to confront gendered elements of the conventional White House family would have come to the forefront as the "first gentleman" role gradually evolved. Certainly, no one would have expected Bill Clinton to choose china patterns, redecorate the living quarters, or become a "fashion trend-setter."

Consensual Sexual Interactions: Which Century Are We In?

The 2016 presidential campaign stimulated discussion of other often-ignored gender-related topics. Despite some progress, sexual harassment and sexual assault, including rape, remain widespread in the workplace and on college campuses (cf. Stanford case, The Hunting Ground). Yet there has been enormous pressure on women—and institutions—to remain silent.

In October 2016, after a video was released of Donald Trump bragging about his ability to sexually grope women he did not know, the presidential candidate said it was only "locker room talk"...not anything he had ever done. Hearing these denials, several women, some well-known, came forth with convincing claims that Trump had groped them or in other ways engaged in inappropriate, non-consensual sexual behavior. Trump responded by denying the charges, insulting the accusers, and threatening lawsuits against the claimants and news media organizations that published the

reports.[149] For many women, the video aroused memories of their own recurring experiences with sexual harassment and assault. After the video was released, Kelly Oxford started a tidal wave of women unburdening long-kept secrets with her tweet: "Women: tweet me your first assaults." Others went on record denouncing Trumps' talk and behavior, and the hashtag #NotOkay surged on Twitter.

In a normal U.S. presidential election, the video and repeated accusations of sexual assault would have forced the candidate to withdraw (as happened with Gary Hart in a previous election). Instead, accusers experienced a backlash not only from Trump but from some media organizations and Trump supporters, illustrating why women are reluctant to come forth or press sexual charges, especially against powerful men (see the 1991 Anita Hill–Clarence Thomas case). These voters' reactions and the continued willingness of so many others to vote for the candidate suggest that "locker room banter" and unwanted sexual advances are still considered normal and acceptable among significant segments of our population. After all, "boys will be boys," at least in the old (false) baboon stereotype of male behavior! Clearly, we need more public conversations about what constitutes appropriate and consensual sexually related behavior.

149. [150]

150. [117]

Sexism: Alive and Well

The 2016 presidential campaign revealed that sexism is alive and well, though not always recognized, explicit, or acknowledged even when obvious (see article by Lynn Sherr). The media, both before and after the election, generally underplayed the impact of sexism despite research showing that sexist attitudes, not political party, were more likely to predict voters preference for Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton.[151]

The campaign also reflected a persistent double standard. Despite widespread agreement that Hillary Clinton was highly qualified to be president, her judgment, competence, "stamina," and even her proven accomplishments were subjected to scrutiny and criticism not normally applied to similarly experienced male candidates. Additional gender-specific criteria were imposed: "likeability," "smiling enough," "warmth," and appearance. She did not "look" "presidential"—an image of leadership that evoked the stereotype baboon model! But being six feet tall with large biceps and acting "tough" and "aggressive" probably would have disqualified her, as a woman, from the start! Other traits that are acceptable in men—ambitious, goal-focused, strategic, "wanting" the presidency—were treated as liabilities in Clinton, part of a "power-hungry" critique,

151. [152]

152. [118]

as though women are not legitimately supposed to pursue or hold power.

Patriarchal Stereotypes of Women

Hillary Clinton's candidacy seems to have activated long-standing patriarchal stereotypes and images of women. One is the "good vs. bad" woman opposition. The "good" woman is chaste, obedient, nurturing, self-sacrificing, gentle—the Virgin Mary/Mother figure. The "bad" woman is greedy, selfish, independent, aggressive, and often, sexually active—importantly, she lies, deceives, is totally untrustworthy. Bad ("nasty") women in myths and reality must be punished for their transgressions; they are dangerous to men and threaten the social order.

As a researcher and someone who had many conversations with voters during this election, I was shocked by the intensity and level of animosity directed at Hillary Clinton. It was palpable, and it went far beyond a normal critique of a normal candidate. At Republican rallies, mass shouts of "lock her up" and T-shirts and bumper stickers bearing slogans like "Trump that Bitch" (and worse) bore a frightening resemblance to violence-inciting hate-speech historically directed at African-Americans and at Jews, gays, and socialists in Nazi Germany, as well as to hate-filled speech that fueled Medieval European witch-burnings in which thousands (if not millions), mainly women, were burned

at the stake ["burn the witch"].[153] Clinton was indeed challenging "traditional" gender roles in U.S. politics, the workplace, and at home. Patriarchy was being threatened, and many, though not all, voters found that profoundly disturbing even though they did not necessarily recognize it or admit it.[155]

Beyond that, there is a long tradition of blaming women for personal and societal disasters—for convincing Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, for the breakup of joint family households in places like India. Women often become the repository for people's frustrations when things "go wrong" (Remember the spoiled sausage in Portuguese culture discussed earlier in this chapter?). Women—like minorities, immigrants, and "evil empires"—are culturally familiar, available targets to which one can legitimately assign blame, frustration, and even rage, as we saw in the 2016 election.[157]

Hillary Clinton as a Symbol of Change

Ironically, Hillary Clinton was depicted and criticized

153. [154]
154. [119]
155. [156]
156. [120]
157. [158]
158. [121]

during the campaign as a symbol of the "establishment" while her key opponents stood for "change." I think it is just the opposite. Hillary Clinton and her campaign and coalition symbolized (and embraced) the major transformations—indeed, upheavals—that have occurred in the United States since the 1960s. It is not just feminism and a new definition of masculinity that rejects the old baboon male-dominance tough-guy model, although that is one change.[159] While economic anxiety and "white nationalism" both played roles, the election was also about an "America" that is changing demographically, socially, religiously, sexually, linguistically, technologically, and ideologically—changing what constitutes "truth" and reality. For many in rural areas, outside forces—especially the government, run by liberal, urban elites—are seen as trying to control one's way of life with gun control, environmental regulations, ending coal mining, banning school (Christian) prayer, requiring schools to teach evolution and comprehensive sex education (vs. abstinence only). Hillary Clinton, her coalition, and her alignment with the Obama White House, not just with its policies but with an African-American "first family," symbolized the intersection of all these social, demographic, and cultural transformations. She truly represented "change."

Ironically, Clinton's opponents, even in the

159. [160]

160. [122]

Democratic Party, were more "establishment" candidates culturally, demographically, and in their gender relationships. Bernie Sanders attracted an enormous, enthusiastic following and came close to winning the Democratic presidential primary. Yet his rhetoric and policy proposals, while unusual in twenty-first century mainstream politics, resembled the economic inequality, anti-Wall Street, "it's only about economics" focus of early twentieth century democratic socialists such as Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas and of progressive Henry Wallace. And, not surprisingly, Sanders appealed largely to Euro-American demographic groups rather than to the broader spectrum of twenty-first century voters.

In short, the election and the candidacy of Hillary Rodham Clinton symbolized more than half a century of enormous change—and a choice between continuing that change or selecting a candidate who symbolized what was traditional, familiar, and, to many, more comfortable. Whether the transformations of the past fifty years will be reversed remains to be seen.[161]

Discussion

From a global perspective, the United States lags behind many countries in women's political leadership and representation. For national legislative bodies, U.S.

161.[162]

162. [123]

women constitute only 19 percent of Congress, **below** the world average of 23 percent, below the average in the Americas, 28 percent, and far below Nordic countries, 41 percent. The U.S. ranks 104th of 193 countries in the world (see http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm). When it comes to political leadership, over 65 nations have elected at least one woman as their head of state, including countries with predominantly Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and/or Buddhist populations. (see https://www.theglobalist.com/women-on-top-of-the-political-world/.) Yet the U.S. still has never elected a woman President (or even Vice-President). Are you surprised by these data or by some of the countries that rank higher than the United States? Why? What do you think are some of the reasons the US lags behind so many other countries?

Additional Resources and Links

Center for American Women and Politics
Presidential Gender Watch
Institute for Women's Policy Research
Pew Research Institute (U.S. and international data)
United Nations, UN Women

WOMEN IN ANTHROPOLOGY

As seen earlier in this chapter, female anthropologists have always played a key role in anthropology. In sex-segregated societies, they have had unique access to women's worlds. Recently, they have analyzed how gender might affect styles of authorship and authority

in ethnographies. Social characteristics, including gender, race, class, sexuality, and religion, also influence how an anthropologist engages in fieldwork and how she and her colleagues relate to one another.[163] Sometimes the identity of an anthropologist creates new opportunities for deeper understanding and connection, but at other times one's personal identity can create professional challenges.

Fieldwork

Women face particular challenges when conducting fieldwork regardless of the culture but particularly in sex-segregated and patriarchal societies. Sometimes women are perceived as more vulnerable than men to sexual harassment, and their romantic choices in fieldwork situations are subject to greater scrutiny than choices made by men in similar situations.[165] Women may be more likely to juggle family responsibilities and professional projects and bring children with them for fieldwork. At first glance, this practice may raise eyebrows because of the risks it brings to accompanying children and because of potential negative impacts on the anthropologist's planned work, but many female anthropologists have found fieldwork undertaken with their families to be a transformative experience both professionally and personally. Whereas appearing as a decontextualized single fieldworker can arouse suspicion, arriving at a field site with the recognizable identities of parent, daughter, or spouse can help people

163. [164]
164. [155]
165. [166]
166. [156]

conceptualize the anthropologist as someone with a role beyond camera-toting interviewer and observer. At the same time, arriving as a multi-person group also complicates what Jocelyn Linnekin called "impression management." One's child is often less aware of delicate matters and less sensitive in communicating preferences to hosts, causing potentially embarrassing situations but also creating levity that might otherwise be slow to develop. Fieldwork as a family unit also allows for a different rhythm to the elusive work-life balance; many families have reported cherishing time spent together during fieldwork since they rarely had so much time together in their activity-filled home settings.[167]

More anthropologists now conduct fieldwork in their home communities. Some wish to explore theoretical and empirical questions best examined in local field sites. Others are reluctant or unable to relocate their families or partners temporarily. Conducting fieldwork close to home can also be a less expensive option than going abroad! But the boundaries of field and home can become quite porous. In their writings, women anthropologists reveal how the realms of public and private and political and personal are connected in the field/home. Innovative, activist, and self-reflective studies address intersections that other scholars treat separately.[169]

Academic Anthropology in the United States

Though the representation of women in U.S. academic

167. [168]
168. [157]
169. [170]
170. [158]

anthropology is now proportional to their numbers in the Ph.D. pool, discrepancies remain between male and female anthropology professors in rank and publication rates. A 2008 report on the status of women in anthropology, for example, found evidence of continuity of the "old boys' network"—the tendency for men in positions of power to develop relationships with other men, which creates pooled resources, positive performance evaluations, and promotions for those men but not for women. Furthermore, since women in the United States are usually socialized to avoid making demands, they often accept lower salary offers than could have been negotiated, which can have significant long-term financial consequences.[171]

Women are also over-represented among non-tenure-track anthropology faculty members who are often paid relatively small per-course stipends and whose teaching leaves little time for research and publishing. Some married women prioritize their partners' careers, limiting their own geographic flexibility and job (and fieldwork) opportunities. Left with few academic job options in a given area, they may leave academia altogether.[173]

On a positive note, women have an increasingly prominent place in the highest ranks of anthropology, including as president of the American Anthropological Association. Nonetheless, systemic gender inequality continues to affect the careers of female anthropologists. Given what we know about gender systems, we should not be surprised.

171. [172]
172. [159]
173. [174]
174. [160]

MASCULINITY STUDIES

Students in gender studies and anthropology courses on gender are often surprised to find that they will be learning about men as well as women. Early women's studies initially employed what has been called an "add women and stir" approach, which led to examinations of gender as a social construct and of women's issues in contemporary society. In the 1990s, women's studies expanded to become gender studies, incorporating the study of other genders, sexuality, and issues of gender and social justice.[175] Gender was recognized as being fundamentally relational: femaleness is linked to maleness, femininity to masculinity. One outgrowth of that work is the field of "masculinity studies."[177]

Masculinity studies goes beyond men and their roles to explore the relational aspects of gender. One focus is the enculturation processes through which boys learn about and learn to perform "manhood." Many U.S. studies (and several excellent videos, such as *Tough Guise* by Jackson Katz), have examined the role of popular culture in teaching boys our culture's key concepts of masculinity, such as being "tough" and "strong," and shown how this "tough guise" stance affects men's relationships with women, with other men, and with societal institutions, reinforcing a culture of violent masculinity. Sociologist Michael Kimmel has further suggested that boys are taught that they live in a "perilous world" he terms "Guyland."[179]

175. [176]
176. [161]
177. [178]
178. [162]
179. [180]
180. [163]

Anthropologists began exploring concepts of masculinity cross-culturally as early as the 1970s, resulting in several key publications in 1981, including Herdt's first book on the Sambia of New Guinea and Ortner and Whitehead's volume, *Sexual Meanings*. In 1990, Gilmore analyzed cross-cultural ethnographic data in his *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts in Masculinity*.[181] Other work followed, including a provocative video on the Sambia, *Guardians of the Flutes*. But the growth of studies of men and masculinity in the United States also stimulated new research approaches, such as "performative" aspects of masculinity and how gender functions in wealthier, post-industrial societies and communities with access to new technologies and mass media.[183]

Anthropologists sometimes turn to unconventional information sources as they explore gendered culture, including popular television commercials. Interestingly, the 2015 Super Bowl commercials produced for the Always feminine product brand also focused on gender themes in its #Likeagirl campaign, which probed the damaging connotations of the phrases "throw like a girl" and "run like a girl" by first asking boys and girls to act out running and throwing, and then asking them to act out a *girl* running and throwing. A companion clip further explored the negative impacts of anti-girl messages, provoking dialogue among Super Bowl viewers and in social media spaces (though, ironically, that dialogue was intended to promote consumption of feminine products). As the clips remind us, while boys and men play major roles in perceptions related to gender, so do the women who raise them, often reinforcing gendered expectations for play and aspiration. Of course, women, like men, are enculturated into their culture's

181. [182]

182. [164]

183. [184]

184. [165]

gender ideology.[185] Both girls and boys—and adults—are profoundly influenced by popular culture.

Though scholars from many disciplines publish important work on masculinity, anthropologists, with their cross-cultural research and perspectives, have significantly deepened and enriched interdisciplinary understandings. Anthropologists have made strong contributions not only by providing nuanced portrayals (of, for example, men in prison, heroin users, migrant laborers, college students, and athletes in the United States) but also through offering vivid accounts of expectations of men in other societies, including the relationship between those expectations and warfare. This can include differences in expectations based on a person's age, other role-based variations, and transformation of traditional roles as a result of globalization.[187]

Not all societies expect men to be "tough guys/guise," and those that do go about it in different ways and result in different impacts on men and women.[189] For example, in Sichuan Province in China, young Nuosu men must prove their maturity through risky behavior such as theft. In recent years, theft has been supplanted for many by heroin use, particularly as young men have left their home communities for urban areas (where they are often feared by city residents and attract suspicion).[191] Meanwhile, in the Middle East, technologies such as assisted reproduction are challenging and

185. [186]
186. [166]
187. [188]
188. [167]
189. [190]
190. [168]
191. [192]
192. [169]

reshaping ideas about masculinity among some Arab men, particularly men who acknowledge and struggle with infertility. There and elsewhere, conceptions of fatherhood are considered crucial components of masculinity. In Japan, for example, a man who has not fathered a child is not considered to be fully adult.[193]

Elsewhere, as we saw in the first part of this chapter, men are expected to be gentle nurturers of young children and to behave in ways that do not fit typical U.S. stereotypes. In Na communities, men dote on babies and small children, often rushing to pick them up when they enter a room. In South Korea, men in wildly popular singing groups wear eyeliner and elaborate clothing that would be unusual for U.S. groups, and throughout China and India, as in many other parts of the world, heterosexual men walk down the street holding hands or arm-in-arm without causing raised eyebrows. Physical contact between men, especially in sex-segregated societies, is probably far more common than contact between men and women! Touch is a human form of intimacy that need not have sexual implications. So if male-male relations are the most intimate in a society, physical expressions of those relations are "normal" overall unless there is a cultural fear of male physical intimacy. There is much more nuance in actual behavior than initial appearances lead people to believe.

Anthropologists are also applying approaches taken in American studies to other cultures. They are engaging in more-intimate discussions of males' self-perceptions, dilemmas, and challenges and have not hesitated to intercede, carefully, in the communities in which they work. Visual anthropologist Harjant Gill, conducting research in the Punjab region of India, began asking men about pressures they faced and found that the conversations prompted unexpected reflection. Gill titled his film *Mardistan* (*Macholand*) and shepherded the film through television broadcasts and smaller-

193. [194]

194. [170]

scale viewings to encourage wide discussion in India of the issues he explored.[195]

195. [196]

196. [171]

PART VII

BELIEVING, KNOWING, CHANGING

18. Religion

"Religion"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Sashur Henninger-Rener (sashur.henninger@gmail.com)

Humans have always wondered about the meaning of the life, the nature of the universe, and the forces that shape our lives. While it is impossible to know for sure how the people who lived thousands of years ago answered these kinds of questions, there are some clues. Fifty thousand years ago, human communities buried the dead with stone tools, shells, animal bones, and other objects, a practice that suggests they were preparing the deceased for an afterlife, or a world beyond this one. Thirty thousand years ago, artists entered the Chauvet cave in France and painted dramatic scenes of animals on the cave walls along with abstract symbols that suggest the images were part of a supernatural belief system, possibly one focused on ensuring safety or success in hunting.[1] A few thousand years later, collections of small clay sculptures, known as Venus figurines, began appearing across Eurasia. They seem to

1. [2]
2. [1]

express ideas about fertility or motherhood and may have been viewed as magical.[3]



An image from the Chauvet cave painted about 32,000 years ago. The paintings may have been part of religious ceremonies intended to ensure success in hunting. and 25,000 BC and may have been associated with spiritual beliefs about motherhood or fertility.

3. [4]

4. [2]



The Venus of Willendorf figurine was made between 28,000 and 25,000 BC and may have been associated with spiritual beliefs about motherhood or fertility.

DEFINING RELIGION

Because ideas about the supernatural are part of every human culture, understanding these beliefs is important to anthropologists. However, studying supernatural beliefs is challenging for several reasons. The first difficulty arises from the challenge of defining the topic itself. The word "religion," which is commonly used in the United States to refer to participation in a distinct form of faith such as Christianity, Islam, or Judaism, is not a universally recognized idea. Many cultures have no word for

"religion" at all and many societies do not make a clear distinction between beliefs or practices that are "religious," or "spiritual" and other habits that are an ordinary part of daily life. For instance, leaving an incense offering in a household shrine dedicated to the spirits of the ancestors may be viewed as a simple part of the daily routine rather than a "religious" practice. There are societies that believe in supernatural beings, but do not call them "gods." Some societies do not see a distinction between the natural and the supernatural observing, instead, that the spirits share the same physical world as humans. Concepts like "heaven," "hell," or even "prayer" do not exist in many societies. The divide between "religion" and related ideas like "spirituality" or even "magic" is also murky in some cultural contexts.

To study supernatural beliefs, anthropologists must cultivate a perspective of cultural relativism and strive to understand beliefs from an emic or insider's perspective. Imposing the definitions or assumptions from one culture on another is likely to lead to misunderstandings. One example of this problem can be found in the early anthropological research of Sir James Frazer who attempted to compose the first comprehensive study of the world's major magical and religious belief systems. Frazer was part of early generation of anthropologists whose work was based on reading and questionnaires mailed to missionaries and colonial officials rather than travel and participant-observation. As a result, he had only minimal information about the beliefs he wrote about and he was quick to apply his own opinions. In *The Golden Bough* (1890) he dismissed many of the spiritual beliefs he documented: "I look upon [them] not merely as false but as preposterous and absurd."[5] His contemporary, Sir E.B. Tylor, was less dismissive of unfamiliar belief systems, but he defined religion minimally and, for some, in overly narrow terms as "the belief in supernatural beings." This definition

5. [6]

6. [3]

excludes much of what people around the world actually believe.[7] As researchers gained more information about other cultures, their ideas about religion became more complex. The sociologist Emile Durkheim recognized that religion was not simply a belief in "supernatural beings," but a set of practices and social institutions that brought members of a community together. Religion, he said, was "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set aside and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them."[9]

Durkheim's analysis of religion emphasized the significance of spiritual beliefs for relationships between people. Subsequent anthropological research in communities around the world has confirmed that rituals associated with beliefs in the supernatural play a significant role in structuring community life, providing rules or guidelines for behavior, and bonding members of a community to one another. Interestingly, religious "beings," such as gods or spirits, also demonstrate social qualities. Most of the time, these beings are imagined in familiar terms as entities with personalities, desires, and "agency," an ability to make decisions and take action. Supernatural beings, in other words, are not so different from people.[11] In keeping with this idea, religion can be defined as "the means by which human society and culture is extended to include

7. [8]
8. [4]
9. [10]
10. [5]
11. [12]
12. [6]

the nonhuman."[13] This definition is deliberately broad and can be used to encompass many different kinds of belief systems.

Many religions involve ideas or rituals that could be described as "magical" and the relationship between religion and magic is complex. In his book A *General Theory of Magic* (1902), Marcel Mauss suggested that religion and magic were two opposite poles on a spectrum of spiritual beliefs. Magic was at one end of the spectrum; it was private, secret, and individual. Religion was at the opposite end of the spectrum; it was public and oriented toward bringing the community together.[15] Although Mauss' formulation presented religion and magic as part of the same general way of thinking, many contemporary anthropologists are convinced that making a distinction between religion and magic is artificial and usually not particularly useful. With this caution in mind, magic can be defined as practices intended to bring supernatural forces under one's personal control. Sorcerers are individuals who seek to use magic for their own purposes. It is important to remember that both magic and sorcery are labels that have historically been used by outsiders, including anthropologists, to describe spiritual beliefs with which they are unfamiliar. Words from the local language are almost always preferable for representing how people think about themselves.

THEORIES OF RELIGION

Sir James Frazer's effort to interpret religious mythology was the

13. [14]
14. [7]
15. [16]
16. [8]

first of many attempts to understand the reasons why cultures develop various kinds of spiritual beliefs. In the early twentieth century, many anthropologists applied a functional approach to this problem by focusing on the ways religion addressed human needs. Bronislaw Malinowski (1931), who conducted research in the Trobriand Islands located near Papua New Guinea, believed that religious beliefs met psychological needs. He observed that religion "is not born out of speculation or reflection, still less out of illusion or apprehension, but rather, out of the real tragedies of human life, out of the conflict between human plans and realities."[17]

At the time of Malinowski's research, the Trobriand Islanders participated in an event called the kula ring, a tradition that required men to build canoes and sail on long and dangerous journeys between neighboring islands to exchange ritual items. Malinowski noticed that before these dangerous trips several complex rituals had to be performed, but ordinary sailing for fishing trips required no special preparations. What was the difference? Malinowski concluded that the longer trips were not only more dangerous, but also provoked more anxiety because the men felt they had less control over what might happen. On long voyages, there were many things that could go wrong, few of which could be planned for or avoided. He argued that religious rituals provided a way to reduce or control anxiety when anticipating these conditions.[19] The use of rituals to reduce anxiety has been documented in many other settings. George Gmelch (1971) documented forms of "baseball magic" among professional athletes. Baseball players, for instance, have rituals related to how they eat,

17. [18]
18. [9]
19. [20]
20. [10]

dress, and even drive to the ballpark, rituals they believe contribute to good luck.[21]

As a functionalist, Malinowski believed that religion provided shared values and behavioral norms that created solidarity between people. The sociologist Emile Durkheim also believed that religion played an important role in building connections between people by creating shared definitions of the sacred and profane. Sacred objects or ideas are set apart from the ordinary and treated with great respect or care while profane objects or ideas are ordinary and can be treated with disregard or contempt. Sacred things could include a God or gods, a natural phenomenon, an animal or many other things. Religion, Durkheim concluded, was "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices that unite, into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them."[23] Once a person or a thing was designated as sacred, Durkheim believed that celebrating it through ritual was a powerful way to unite communities around shared values.[25] In addition, celebrating the sacred can create an intense emotional experience Durkheim referred to as collective effervescence, a passion or energy that arises when groups of people share the same thoughts and emotions. The experience of collective effervescence magnifies the emotional impact of an event and can create a sense of awe or wonder.[27]

21. [22]
22. [11]
23. [24]
24. [12]
25. [26]
26. [13]
27. [28]

Following Durkheim, many anthropologists, including Dame Mary Douglas, have found it useful to explore the ways in which definitions of sacred and profane structure religious beliefs. In her book *Purity and Danger* (1966), Douglas analyzed the way in which cultural ideas about things that were "dirty" or "impure" influenced religious beliefs. The kosher dietary rules observed by Jews were one prominent example of the application of this kind of thinking.[29]

The philosopher and historian Karl Marx famously called religion "the opium of the people."[31] He viewed religion as an ideology, a way of thinking that attempts to justify inequalities in power and status. In his view, religion created an illusion of happiness that helped people cope with the economic difficulties of life under capitalism. As an institution, Marx believed that the Christian church helped to legitimize and support the political and economic inequality of the working class by encouraging ordinary people to orient themselves toward the afterlife, where they could expect to receive comfort and happiness. He argued that the obedience and conformity advocated by religious leaders as a means of reaching heaven also persuaded people not to fight for better economic or social conditions in their current lives. Numerous examples of the use of religion to legitimize or justify power differences have been documented cross-culturally including the existence of divine rulers, who were believed to be empowered by the Gods themselves, in ancient Egyptian and Incan societies. A glimpse of the legitimizing role of religion is also seen in the U.S. practice of having elected officials take an oath of office using the Bible or another holy book.

The psychologist Sigmund Freud believed that religion is the

28. [14]
29. [30]
30. [15]
31. [32]
32. [16]

institution that prevents us from acting upon our deepest and most awful desires. One of his most famous examples is the Oedipal complex, the story of Oedipus who (unknowingly) had a sexual relationship with his mother and, once he discovered this, ripped out his own eyes in a violent and gory death. One possible interpretation of this story is that there is an unconscious sexual desire among males for their mothers and among females their fathers. These desires can never be acknowledged, let alone acted on, because of the damage they would cause to society.[33] In one of his most well-known works, *Totem and Taboo*, Freud proposes that religious beliefs provide rules or restrictions that keep the worst anti-social instincts, like the Oedipal complex, suppressed. He developed the idea of "totemic religions," belief systems based on the worship of a particular animal or object, and suggested that the purpose of these religions was to regulate interactions with socially significant and potentially disruptive objects and relationships.[35]

One interesting interpretation of religious beliefs that builds on the work of Durkheim, Marx, and Freud is Marvin Harris' analysis of the Hindu prohibition against killing cows. In Hinduism, the cow is honored and treated with respect because of its fertility, gentle nature, and association with some Hindu deities. In his book *Cow, Pigs, Wars, and Witches* (1974), Harris suggested that these religious ideas about the cow were actually based in an economic reality. In India, cows are more valuable alive as a source of milk or for doing work in the fields than they are dead as meat. For this reason, he argued, cows were defined as sacred and set apart from other kinds of animals that could be killed and eaten. The subsequent

33. [34]
34. [17]
35. [36]
36. [18]

development of religious explanations for cows' specialness reinforced and legitimated the special treatment.[37]

A symbolic approach to the study of religion developed in the mid-twentieth century and presented new ways of analyzing supernatural beliefs. Clifford Geertz, one of the anthropologists responsible for creating the symbolic approach, defined religion as "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations.... by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."[39] Geertz suggested that religious practices were a way to enact or make visible important cultural ideas. The symbols used in any religion, such as a cross or even a cow, can be interpreted or "read" by anthropologists to discern important cultural values. At the same time, religious symbols reinforce values or aspirations in members of the religious community. The Christian cross, which is associated with both death and resurrection, demonstrates ideas about sacrifice and putting the needs of others in the community first. The cross also symbolizes deeper ideas about the nature of life itself: that suffering can have positive outcomes and that there is something beyond the current reality.

A symbolic approach to religion treats religious beliefs as a kind of "text" or "performance" that can be interpreted by outsiders. Like the other theories described in this section, symbolic approaches present some risk of misinterpretation. Religious beliefs involve complex combinations of personal and social values as well as embodied or visceral feelings that cannot always be appreciated or

37. [38]
38. [19]
39. [40]
40. [20]

even recognized by outsiders. The persistently large gap between emic (insider) and etic (outsider) explanations for religious beliefs and practices makes the study of religion one of the most challenging topics in cultural anthropology.

ELEMENTS OF RELIGION

Despite the wide variety of supernatural beliefs found in cultures around the world, most belief systems do share some common elements. The first of these characteristic is cosmology, an explanation for the origin or history of the world. Religious cosmologies provide "big picture" explanations for how human life was created and provide a perspective on the forces or powers at work in the world. A second characteristic of religion is a belief in the supernatural, a realm beyond direct human experience. This belief could include a God or gods, but this is not a requirement. Quite a few religious beliefs, as discussed below, involve more abstract ideas about supernatural forces. Most religions also share a third characteristic: rules governing behavior. These rules define proper conduct for individuals and for society as a whole and are oriented toward bringing individual actions into harmony with spiritual beliefs. A fourth element is ritual, practices or ceremonies that serve a religious purpose and are usually supervised by religious specialists. Rituals may be oriented toward the supernatural, such as rituals designed to please the gods, but at the same time they address the needs of individuals or the community as a whole. Funeral rituals, for instance, may be designed to ensure the passage of a deceased person to the afterlife, but also simultaneously provide emotional comfort to those who are grieving and provide an outlet for the community to express care and support.

Religious Cosmologies

Religious cosmologies are ways of explaining the origin of the universe and the principles or "order" that governs reality. In its simplest form, a cosmology can be an origin story, an explanation for the history, present state, and possible futures of the world and the origins of the people, spirits, divinities, and forces that populate it. The ancient Greeks had an origin story that began with an act of creation from Chaos, the first thing to exist. The deities Erebus, representing darkness, and Nyx, representing night, were born from Chaos. Nyx gave birth to Aether (light) and Hemera (day). Hemera and Nyx took turns exiting the underworld, creating the phenomenon of day and night. Aether and Hemera next created Gaia (Earth), the mother of all life, who gave birth to the sky, the mountains, the sea, and eventually to a pantheon of gods. One of these gods, Prometheus, shaped humans out of mud and gave them the gift of fire. This origin story reflects many significant cultural ideas. One of these is the depiction of a world organized into a hierarchy with gods at the top and humans obligated to honor them.

Traditional Navajo origin stories provide a different view of the organization of the universe. These stories suggested that the world is a set of fourteen stacked "plates" or "platters." Creation began at the lowest levels and gradually spread to the top. The lower levels contained animals like insects as well as animal-people and bird-people who lived in their own fully-formed worlds with distinct cultures and societies. At the top level, First Man and First Woman eventually emerged and began making preparations for other humans, creating a sweat lodge, hoghan (traditional house), and preparing sacred medicine bundles. During a special ceremony, the first human men and women were formed and they created those who followed.[41] Like the Greek origin story, the Navajo cosmology

41. [42]

explains human identity and emphasizes the debt humans owe to their supernatural ancestors.

The first two chapters of the Biblical Book of Genesis, which is the foundation for both Judaism and Christianity, describe the creation of the world and all living creatures. The exact words vary in different translations, but describe a God responsible for creating the world and everything in it: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The six-day process began with the division of light from darkness, land from water, and heaven from earth. On the fifth day, "God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good."[43] On the sixth day, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."[45] This cosmology differs from the others in describing an act of creation by a single deity, God, but shares with the Greek and Navajo versions a description of creation that emphasizes the relationship between people and their creator.

Reading these cosmologies also raises the question of how they should be interpreted. Are these origin stories regarded as literal truth in the cultures in which they originated? Or, are the stories metaphorical and symbolic? There is no simple answer to this question. Within any culture, individuals may disagree about the nature of their own religious traditions. Christians, for instance, differ in the extent to which they view the contents of the Bible as fact. Cultural relativism requires that anthropologists avoid making judgments about whether any cultural idea, including religious

42. [21]
43. [44]
44. [22]
45. [46]
46. [23]

beliefs, is "correct" or "true." Instead, a more useful approach is to try to understand the multiple ways people interpret or make sense of their religious beliefs. In addition it is important to consider the function a religious cosmology has in the wider society. As Bronislaw Malinowski observed, a myth or origin story is not an "idle tale, but a hard-worked active force."[47]

Belief in the Supernatural

Another characteristic shared by most religions is a concept of the supernatural, spirits, divinities, or forces not governed by natural laws. The supernatural can take many forms. Some supernatural entities are anthropomorphic, having human characteristics. Other supernatural forces are more generalized, seen in phenomena like the power of the wind. The amount of involvement that supernatural forces or entities have in the lives of humans varies cross-culturally.

Abstract Forces

Many cultures are organized around belief in an impersonal supernatural force, a type of religion known as animatism. The idea of *mana* is one example. The word itself comes from Oceania and may originally have meant "powerful wind," "lightning" or "storm." Today, it still refers to power, but in a more general sense. Aram Oroi, a pastor from the Solomon Islands, has compared mana to turning on a flashlight: "You sense something powerful but unseen,

47. [48]

48. [24]

and then—*click*—its power is made manifest in the world."[49] Traditionally, the ability to accumulate mana in certain locations, or in one's own body, was to become potent or successful.[51] Certain locations such as mountains or ancient sites (*marae*) have particularly strong mana. Likewise, individual behaviors, including sexual or violent acts, were traditionally viewed as ways to accumulate mana for oneself.

Interestingly, the idea of *mana* has spread far beyond its original cultural context. In 1993, Richard Garfield incorporated the idea in the card game Magic: The Gathering. Players of the game, which has sold millions of copies since its introduction, use mana as a source of power to battle wizards and magical creatures. Mana is also a source of power in the immensely popular computer game World of Warcraft.[53] These examples do show cultural appropriation, the act of copying an idea from another culture and in the process distorting its meaning. However, they also demonstrate how compelling animist ideas about abstract supernatural power are across cultures. Another well-known example of animatism in popular culture is "the Force" depicted in the George Lucas *Star Wars* films. The Force is depicted as flowing through everything and is used by Luke Skywalker as a source of potency and insight when he destroys the Death Star.

49. [50]
50. [25]
51. [52]
52. [26]
53. [54]
54. [27]

Spirits



A spirit house in Thailand. The houses provide shelter for local spirits that could trouble humans if they become displeased.

The line between the natural and the supernatural can be blurry. Many people believe that humans have a supernatural or spiritual element that coexists within their natural bodies. In Christianity, this element is called the soul. In Hinduism, it is the *atman*.[55] The Tausūg, a group who live in the Philippines, believe that the soul has four parts: a transcendent soul that stays in the spiritual realm even when a person is alive; a life-soul that is attached to the body, but

55. [56]

56. [28]

can move through dreams; the breath, which is always attached to the body, and the spirit-soul, which is like a person's shadow.[57]

Many people believe that the spirit survives after an individual dies, sometimes remaining on Earth and sometimes departing for a supernatural realm. Spirits, or "ghosts," who remain on Earth may continue to play an active role in the lives of their families and communities. Some will be well-intentioned and others will be malevolent. Almost universally, spirits of the deceased are assumed to be needy and to make demands on the living. For this reason, many cultures have traditions for the veneration of the dead, rituals intended to honor the deceased, or to win their favor or cooperation. When treated properly, ancestor spirits can be messengers to gods, and can act on behalf of the living after receiving prayers or requests. If they are displeased, ancestor spirits can become aggravated and wreak havoc on the living through illness and suffering. To avoid these problems, offerings in the form of favorite foods, drinks, and gifts are made to appease the spirits. In China, as well as in many other countries, filial piety requires that the living continue to care for the ancestors. [59] In Madagascar, where bad luck and misfortune can be attributed to spirits of the dead who believe they have been neglected, a body may be repeatedly exhumed and shown respect by cleaning the bones.[61]

If humans contain a supernatural spirit, essence, or soul, it is logical to think that non-human entities may have their own sparks of the divine. Religions based on the idea that plants, animals, inanimate objects, and even natural phenomena like weather have

57. [58]
58. [29]
59. [60]
60. [30]
61. [62]
62. [31]

a spiritual or supernatural element are called animism. The first anthropological description of animism came from Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, who believed it was the earliest type of religious practice to develop in human societies.[63] Tylor suggested that ordinary parts of the human experience, such as dreaming, formed the basis for spiritual beliefs. When people dream, they may perceive that they have traveled to another place, or may be able to communicate with deceased members of their families. This sense of altered consciousness gives rise to ideas that the world is more than it seems. Tylor suggested that these experiences, combined with a pressing need to answer questions about the meaning of life, were the basis for all religious systems.[65] He also assumed that animist religions evolved into what he viewed as more sophisticated religious systems involving a God or gods.

63. [64]
64. [32]
65. [66]
66. [33]



The first torii at the entrance to Nikkō Tōshō-gū, Tochigi Prefecture, Japan.

Today, Tylor's views about the evolution of religion are considered misguided. No belief system is inherently more sophisticated than another. Several animist religions exist today and have millions of adherents. One of the most well-known is Shintoism, the traditional religion of Japan. Shintoism recognizes spirits known as *kami* that exist in plants, animals, rocks, places and sometimes people. Certain locations have particularly strong connections to the kami, including mountains, forests, waterfalls, and shrines. Shinto shrines in Japan are marked by *torii* gates that mark the separation between ordinary reality and sacred space (Figure 4).

Gods

The most powerful non-human spirits are gods, though in practice there is no universal definition of a "god" that would be

recognized by all people. In general, gods are extremely powerful and not part of nature—not human, or animal. Despite their unnaturalness, many gods have personalities or qualities that are recognizable and relatable to humans. They are often anthropomorphic, imagined in human form, or zoomorphic, imagined in animal form. In some religions, gods interact directly with humans while in others they are more remote.

Anthropologists categorize belief systems organized around a God or gods using the terms monotheism and polytheism. Monotheistic religions recognize a single supreme God. The largest monotheistic religions in the world today are Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Together these religions have more than 3.8 billion adherents worldwide.[67] Polytheistic religions include several gods. Hinduism, one of the world's largest polytheistic religions with more than 1 billion practitioners, has a pantheon of deities each with different capabilities and concerns.[69]

Rules of Behavior

Religious beliefs are an important element of social control because these beliefs help to define acceptable behaviors as well as punishments, including supernatural consequences, for misbehavior. One well-known example are the ideas expressed in the Ten Commandments, which are incorporated in the teachings of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism and prohibit behaviors such as theft, murder, adultery, dishonesty, and jealousy while also

67. [68]
68. [34]
69. [70]
70. [35]

emphasizing the need for honor and respect between people. Behavior that violates the commandments brings both social disapproval from other members of the religious community and potential punishment from God.

Buddhism, the world's fourth largest religion, demonstrates the strong connection between spiritual beliefs and rules for everyday behavior. Buddhists follow the teachings of Buddha, who was an ordinary human who achieved wisdom through study and discipline. There is no God or gods in some forms of Buddhism. Instead, individuals who practice Buddhism use techniques like meditation to achieve the insight necessary to lead a meaningful life and ultimately, after many lifetimes, to achieve the goal of *nirvana*, release from suffering.

Although Buddhism defies easy categorization into any anthropological category, there is an element of animatism represented by *karma*, a moral force in the universe. Individual actions have effects on one's karma. Kindness toward others, for instance, yields positive karma while acts that are disapproved in Buddhist teachings, such as killing an animal, create negative karma. The amount of positive karma a person builds-up in a lifetime is important because it will determine how the individual will be reborn. Reincarnation, the idea that a living being can begin another life in a new body after death, is a feature of several religions. In Buddhism, the form of a human's reincarnation depends on the quality of the karma developed during life. Rebirth in a human form is considered good fortune because humans have the ability to control their own thoughts and behaviors. They can follow the Noble Eightfold Path, rules based on the teachings of Buddha that emphasize the need for discipline, restraint, humility, and kindness in every aspect of life. [71]

71. [72]

72. [36]

Rituals and Religious Practitioners

The most easily observed elements of any religious belief system are rituals. Victor Turner (1972) defined ritual as "a stereotyped sequence of activities ... performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests."[73] Rituals have a concrete purpose or goal, such as a wedding ritual that results in a religiously sanctioned union between people, but rituals are also symbolic. The objects and activities involved in rituals "stand in for" or mean more than what they actually are. In a wedding ceremony in the United States, the white color of the wedding dress is a traditional symbol of purity.

A large amount of anthropological research has focused on identifying and interpreting religious rituals in a wide variety of communities. Although the details of these practices differ in various cultural settings, it is possible to categorize them into types based on their goals. One type of ritual is a rite of passage, a ceremony designed to transition individuals between life stages.[75] A second type of ritual is a rite of intensification, actions designed to bring a community together, often following a period of crisis.[77] Revitalization rituals, which also often follow periods of crisis in a community, are ambitious attempts to resolve serious problems, such as war, famine, or poverty through a spiritual or supernatural intervention.[79]

73. [74]
74. [37]
75. [76]
76. [38]
77. [78]
78. [39]
79. [80]

Rites of Passage

In his original description of rites of passage, Arnold Van Gennep (1909) noted that these rituals were carried out in three distinct stages: separation, liminality, and incorporation. During the first stage, individuals are removed from their current social identity and begin preparations to enter the next stage of life. The liminal period that follows is a time in which individuals often undergo tests, trials, or activities designed to prepare them for their new social roles. In the final stage of incorporation, individuals return to the community with a new socially recognized status. [81]

Rites of passage that transition children into a new status as adults are common around the world. In Xhosa communities in South Africa, teenage boys were traditionally transitioned to manhood using a series of acts that moved them through each of the three ritual stages. In the separation stage, the boys leave their homes and are circumcised; they cannot express distress or signs of pain during the procedure. Following the circumcision, they live in isolation while their wounds heal, a liminal phase during which they do not talk to anyone other than boys who are also undergoing the rite of passage. This stressful time helps to build bonds between the boys that will follow them through their lives as adult men. Before their journey home, the isolated living quarters are burned to the ground, symbolizing the loss of childhood. When the participants return to their community, the incorporation phase, they are recognized as men and allowed to learn the secret stories of the community.[83]

80. [40]
81. [82]
82. [41]
83. [84]

Rites of Intensification



Land Diving on Pentecost Island, Vanuatu.

Rites of intensification are also extremely common in communities worldwide. These rituals are used to bind members of the community together, to create a sense of communitas or unity that encourages people to see themselves as members of community. One particularly dramatic example of this ritual is the Nagol land diving ceremony held each spring on the island of Pentecost in Vanuatu in the South Pacific. Like many rituals, land diving has several goals. One of these is to help ensure a good harvest by impressing the spirits with a dramatic display of bravery. To accomplish this, men from the community construct wooden towers sixty to eighty feet high, tie ropes made from tree vines around their ankles, and jump head-first toward the ground (Figure 5). Preparations for the land diving involve almost every member of the community. Men spend a month or more working together to build the tower and collect the vines. The women of the community

84. [42]

prepare special costumes and dances for the occasion and everyone takes care of land divers who may be injured during the dive. Both the preparations for the land diving and the festivities that follow are a powerful rite of intensification. Interestingly, the ritual is simultaneously a rite of passage; boys can be recognized as men by jumping from high portions of the tower witnessed by elders of the community.[85]

Rites of Revitalization

All rites of revitalization originate in difficult or even catastrophic circumstances. One notable example is a ritual that developed on the island of Tanna in the South Pacific. During World War II, many islands in the South Pacific were used by the U.S. military as temporary bases. Tanna was one of these locations and this formerly isolated community experienced an extremely rapid transformation as the U.S. military introduced modern conveniences such as electricity and automobiles. In an attempt to make sense of these developments, the island's residents developed a variety of theories about the reason for these changes. One possible explanation was that the foreign materials had been given to the islanders by a powerful deity or ancestral spirit, an entity who eventually acquired the name John Frum. The name may be based on a common name the islanders would have encountered while the military base was in operation: "John from America."

When the war ended and the U.S. military departed, the residents of Tanna experienced a kind of trauma as the material goods they had enjoyed disappeared and the John Frum ritual began. Each year on February fifteenth, many of the island's residents construct

85. [86]

86. [43]

copies of U.S. airplanes, runways, or towers and march in military formation with replicas of military rifles and American blue jeans. The ritual is intended to attract John Frum, and the material wealth he controls, back to the island. Although the ritual has not yet had its intended transformative effect, the participants continue the ritual. When asked to explain his continued faith, one village elder explained: "You Christians have been waiting 2,000 years for Jesus to return to Earth, and you haven't given up hope."[87] This John Frum custom is sometimes called a cargo cult, a term used to describe rituals that seek to attract material prosperity. Although the John Frum ritual is focused on commodities, or "cargo," the term cargo cult is generally not preferred by anthropologists because it oversimplifies the complex motivations involved in the ritual. The word "cult" also has connotations with fringe or dangerous beliefs and this association also distorts understanding of the practice.

Religious Practitioners

Since rituals can be extremely complicated and the outcome is of vital importance to the community, specialist practitioners are often charged with responsibility for supervising the details. In many settings, religious specialists have a high social status and are treated with great respect. Some may become relatively wealthy by charging for their services while others may be impoverished, sometimes deliberately as a rejection of the material world. There is no universal terminology for religious practitioners, but there are three important categories: priests, prophets, and shamans.

Priests, who may be of any gender, are full-time religious practitioners. The position of priest emerges only in societies with

87. [88]

88. [44]

substantial occupational specialization. Priests are the intermediaries between God (or the gods) and humans. Religious traditions vary in terms of the qualifications required for individuals entering the priesthood. In Christian traditions, it is common for priests to complete a program of formal higher education. Hindu priests, known as *pujari*, must learn the sacred language Sanskrit and spend many years becoming proficient in Hindu ceremonies. They must also follow strict lifestyle restrictions such as a vegetarian diet. Traditionally, only men from the Brahmin caste were eligible to become pujari, but this is changing. Today, people from other castes, as well as women, are joining the priesthood. One notable feature of societies that utilize full-time spiritual practitioners is a separation between ordinary believers and the God or gods. As intermediaries, priests have substantial authority to set the rules associated with worship practice and to control access to religious rites.[89]

The term shaman has been used for hundreds of years to refer to a part time religious practitioner. Shamans carry out religious rituals when needed, but also participate in the normal work of the community. A shaman's religious practice depends on an ability to engage in direct communication with the spirits, gods, or supernatural realm. An important quality of a shaman is the ability to transcend normal reality in order to communicate with and perhaps even manipulate supernatural forces in an alternate world. This ability can be inherited or learned.[91] Transcending from the ordinary to the spiritual realm gives shamans the ability to do many things such as locate lost people or animals or heal the sick by identifying the spiritual cause of illness.

89. [90]
90. [45]
91. [92]
92. [46]

Among the Chukchi, who live in northern Russia, the role of the shaman is thought to be a special calling, one that may be especially appropriate for people whose personality traits seem abnormal in the context of the community. Young people who suffer from nervousness, anxiety, or moodiness, for example may feel a call to take up shamanistic practice.[93] There has been some research suggesting that shamanism may be a culturally accepted way to deal with conditions like schizophrenia.[95] If true, this might be because achieving an altered state of consciousness is essential for shamanic work. Entering an altered state, which can be achieved through dreams, hallucinogenic drugs, rhythmic music, exhaustion through dance, or other means, makes it possible for shamans to directly engage with the supernatural realm.

Shamans of the upper Amazon in South America have been using *ayahuasca*, a drink made from plants that have hallucinogenic effects, for centuries. The effects of ayahuasca start with the nervous system:

One under the control of the narcotic sees unroll before him quite a spectacle: most lovely landscapes, monstrous animals, vipers which approach and wind down his body or are entwined like rolls of thick cable, at a few centimeters distance; as well, one sees who are true friends and those who betray him or who have done him ill; he observes the cause of the illness which he sustains, at the same time being presented with the most advantageous remedy; he takes part in fantastic hunts; the things which he most dearly loves or abhors acquire in these moments extraordinary vividness and color,

93. [94]
94. [47]
95. [96]
96. [48]

and the scenes in which his life normally develop adopt the most beautiful and emotional expression.[97]

Among the Shipibo people of Peru, ayahuasca is thought to be the substance that allows the soul of a shaman to leave his body in order to retrieve a soul that has been lost or stolen. In many cultures, soul loss is the predominant explanation for illness. The Shipibo believe that the soul is a separate entity from the body, one that is capable of leaving and returning at will. Shamans can also steal souls. The community shaman, under the influence of ayahuasca, is able to find and retrieve a soul, perhaps even killing the enemy as revenge.[99]

Anthropologist Scott Hutson (2000) has described similarities between the altered state of consciousness achieved by shamans and the mental states induced during a rave, a large dance party characterized by loud music with repetitive patterns. In a rave, bright lights, exhausting dance, and sometimes the use of hallucinogenic drugs, induce similar psychological effects to shamanic trancing. Hutson argues that through the rave individuals are able to enter altered states of consciousness characterized by a "self-forgetfulness" and an ability to transcend the ordinary self. The DJ at these events is often called a "techno-shaman," an interesting allusion to the guiding role traditional shamans play in their cultures.[101]

A prophet is a person who claims to have direct communication with the supernatural realm and who can communicate divine messages to others. Many religious communities originated with prophecies, including Islam which is based on teachings revealed to

97. [98]
98. [49]
99. [100]
100. [50]
101. [102]
102. [51]

the prophet Muhammad by God. In Christianity and Judaism, Moses is an example of a prophet who received direct revelations from God. Another example of a historically significant prophet is Joseph Smith who founded the Church of Latter Day Saints, after receiving a prophecy from an angel named Moroni who guided him to the location of a buried set of golden plates. The information from the golden plates became the basis for the Book of Mormon.

The major distinction between a priest and the prophet is the source of their authority. A priest gets his or her authority from the scripture and occupational position in a formally organized religious institution. A prophet derives authority from his or her direct connection to the divine and ability to convince others of his or her legitimacy through charisma. The kind of insight and guidance prophets offer can be extremely compelling, particularly in times of social upheaval or suffering.

One prophet who had enormous influence was David Koresh, the leader of the Branch Davidians, a schism of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The Branch Davidians were millenarians, people who believe that major transformations of the world are imminent. David Koresh was extremely charismatic; he was handsome and an eloquent speaker. He offered refuge and solace to people in need and in the process he preached about the coming of an apocalypse, which he believed would be caused by the intrusion of the United States government on the Branch Davidian's lifestyle. Koresh was so influential that when the United States government did eventually try to enter the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas in 1993 to search for illegal weapons, members of the group resisted and exchanged gunfire with federal agents. Eventually, under circumstances that are still disputed, a fire erupted in the compound and eighty-six people, including Koresh, were killed.[103] Ultimately, the U.S. government helped to fulfill the

103. [104]

104. [52]

apocalyptic vision of the group and David Koresh became a martyr. The Branch Davidians evolved into a new group, "Branch, Lord our Righteousness," and today many await Koresh's return.[105]

CONCLUSION

Religion is of central importance to the lives of people in the majority of the world's cultures; more than eight-in-ten people worldwide identify with a religious group.[107] However, it is also true that the number of people who say that they have no religious affiliation is growing. There are now about as many people in the world who consider themselves religiously "unaffiliated" as there are Roman Catholics.[109] This is an important reminder that religions, like culture itself, are highly dynamic and subject to constant changes in interpretation and allegiance. Anthropology offers a unique perspective for the study of religious beliefs, the way people think about the supernatural, and how the values and behaviors these beliefs inspire contribute to the lives of individuals and communities. No single set of theories or vocabulary can completely capture the richness of the religious diversity that exists in the world today, but cultural anthropology provides a toolkit for understanding the emotional, social, and spiritual contributions that religion makes to the human experience.

105. [106]
106. [53]
107. [108]
108. [54]
109. [110]
110. [55]

19. Medical Anthropology

MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Dr. Steve Ferzacca



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.openeducationalberta.ca/anth/?p=353#oembed-1

A conversation between the chapter author (Steve Ferzacca) and one of the editors (Alyssa White) about medical anthropology.

What is Medical Anthropology?

Human health is simultaneously a physical and symbolic artifact anchored in history and society. Health, illness, disease, therapies, and medicine are always socially produced, locally specific and also anchored in history. **Medical anthropology** is the holistic study of the human condition as it relates to health (illness) in social, cultural, behavioral, biological, psychological, and historical contexts. From this perspective, illness and health are social facts as well as biological facts.

Medical anthropologists share a common perspective: all human groups assemble methods based on theories of disease, allocate

social roles, embody conceptualizations of health, illness, and disease congruent with available resources. Concepts central to the anthropological perspective – holism, relativism, comparison, social organization – remain central to medical anthropology. For example, medical anthropologists interested in childbirth practices must consider not only the event itself but must also include local understandings of sex roles, rules of marriage and divorce, the status and training of childbirth attendants, and the local health care system of which these practices are apart of. Moreover, medical anthropologists want to know how local health care systems intersect with economic conditions, the limits and possibilities found in ecological relationships, and local cultural understanding that could include religious, social, and aesthetic ideologies. The point is "bare facts" – in this case a child's birth – are understood more fully when local ecological, economic, social, and symbolic frameworks are considered.

Medical anthropology is a biocultural field of study that approaches health and illness in both the past and present using methodologies from all four-fields of anthropology: cultural anthropology, bio-anthropology, archaeology, and linguistic anthropology. An example of this broad methodological range are the methods used to examine what is referred to as the **epidemiological transition**. The epidemiological transition reflects changes in disease profiles of societies as they change over time. The conventional understanding from this health science, epidemiological perspective is that the disease profile of "traditional" societies is dominated by communicable, infection diseases, while the disease profiles of "modern" societies are dominated by chronic, non-communicable disease.

For example, "traditional" societies because of sanitary conditions, nutritional status, and accessibility to health care are subject to the ills that these conditions create; this results in a disease profile that includes cholera, diphtheria, dengue fever, malaria, giardiasis, meningococcal, roundworm, tuberculosis (TB), and yellow fever, to name just a few. "Modern" societies with

modern systems of sanitation, enhanced nutritional status, and access to scientific medicine are plagued by chronic illness and disease that result from these "modern" conditions. Moreover, many of the diseases that populate a modern disease profile are related to human behavior, social conditions, and available resources and technology rather than the traditional profile of disorders caused by organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites.

The change or transition from a traditional disease profile to a modern one is the outcome of changes in sanitation, increased daily nutrition, and accessibility to scientific medicine reflects the "development" processes that are the push and pull towards transition. The four-field approach is critical to understanding this transition. Bio-archaeologists have examined the remains of paleolithic and neolithic groups who practiced foraging and agriculture respectively in order to understand the transition from paleolithic life to agricultural life in terms of nutrition, lifestyle, disease. Bio-anthropologists explore genetic, metabolic, species-related evolutionary effects related to human health in both the past and present. Linguistic anthropologists in concert with cultural anthropologists examine local experience related to societies undergoing epidemiological transitions using fieldwork and other ethnographic approaches, in local places with local sufferers and health care personnel. For example, in Java, Indonesia medical anthropologists have focused ethnographic attention on Javanese sufferers of "modern" diseases. Public health officials and local health care providers use the epidemiological transition in the information they provide that addresses the "transition" taking place for many in Java. Chronic diseases– such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity – are considered the result of adopting a "modern, western lifestyle" (gaya hidup barat). In order to avoid modern health conditions Javanese are reminded to maintain "traditional" approaches to nutrition and eating, even the use of traditional medicines in concert with modern pharmaceuticals. Thus, local health care systems that are used by Javanese to treat "modern" diseases are described by medical anthropologists as an example

of **medical pluralism** in which the use of biomedicine with other forms of complementary, additional medicines are common. The intent is to respond to health problems associated with becoming a developed, modern society by maintaining an authentic Javanese lifestyle as much as possible.

The tools of cultural anthropology – long-term fieldwork and ethnographic methods- are used by medical anthropologists to outline and describe a **local health care system** and its use. One sign of these changes is reflected in language use. The increasing inclusion of English medical terms, and shifts in linguistic expressions of the body, health, illness, disease, and medicine mirror the medical pluralism available in the local health care system organized around the presence of scientific medicine in the public health sector ,traditional medicine available in the marketplace, and the lived experience of sufferers seeking relief. From this local perspective, global circulations that lead to changes in food and eating, physical activity, and so forth– McDonald's, for example – can be examined as well.

Defining "Health", "Disease", "Illness"

All human groups assemble methods based on theories of disease, allocate social roles, embody conceptualizations of health, illness, and disease congruent with available material, social, and cultural resources. Medical anthropologists working ethnographically in local places have documented a variety of definitions of health, disease, and illness that reflect local circumstances and knowledge. In addition, different societies and cultures, classes and castes, genders and sexual orientations can hold distinctly different conceptions of the body in health and illness. For example, the body as machine metaphor important in the development of scientific medicine is reflected in the many specialists that provide health care for various "parts" of the body. In Java, the tree of life stands as

a metaphor of the body, emphasizing a body of flows and blockages. Such a conception of the body is relevant in a local health care system for which massage (pijet) is an important feature.

The methods applied as health care are both symbolic and practical, and anchored in social relationships and local histories. Therefore, medical anthropology considers all forms of "medicine" as **ethnomedicine** assembled from and within local practices and knowledge. From this perspective, scientific medicine – often referred to in the literature as **biomedicine** – would be approached by medical anthropologists in the same way as ayurvedic, unani, or traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Medical anthropologists would consider these all ethno-medicines: medicine that reflects the social structure, history, values of a group. For example, it is not surprising given a history of capitalism that North American ethno-medicine defines health and illness in terms of independence and productivity. Biomedicine reflects the values found in the economic system that intersects with social relations and cultural logic.

Anthropology, and subsequently medical anthropology, is inherently comparative. Ethnographic portraits from around the world can be compared to understand patterns of similarity as well as differences. Medical anthropology has developed methods and concepts that aid not only in local descriptions of health and disease, but also as tools to conduct comparisons of health and illness across cultures and societies. For example, medical anthropologists can compare theories of disease causation, referred as **ethno-etiology**, or the manner in which sick roles, therapeutics and forms of care are managed. In Java, startle response (latah) is cited as the cause of many diseases and illnesses, both physical and psychological. Scientific medicine relies on biology to determine causes of disease and illness. Sick roles can vary widely in and across cultures. Leprosy in some societies is highly stigmatized, having a dramatic effect on the way in which the sick role is managed– by doctors and healers, family members, neighbors and co-workers, and by the afflicted themselves. Conceptualizations of the body also vary widely. As we saw in the lecture on diabetes, Javanese doctors

and sufferers agree that the adoption of a Western lifestyle is a major cause, while in the U.S. human behavior leading to biological consequences with a focus on physiology is the dominant opinion. Both look to human behavior but in the Javanese case "history" and changing history from developing to developed nationhood is central to disease causation, while the course of the morbidity associated with diabetes is the temporal-historical elements of concern. In addition, the body itself is considered differently in this cross-cultural perspective on diabetes. In the U.S., obesity is associated as an important physical fact in the onset of type 2 diabetes. Obesity is highly stigmatized as an undesirable condition attributed often to undesirable traits. If someone is "fat", then all kinds and qualities of negative judgement are brought forward. In Java, a "fat" body represents a stage in one's prosperity. Bodies deemed obese in the U.S. are not always labeled in stigmatized terms in Java, but rather as a physical example of someone who has/is experiencing prosperity. Anorexia in the U.S. also signifies the stigma associated with body weight and shape. An aging body also receives different status across societies and cultures. In the U.S., aging bodies counter notions of health that emphasize independence and productivity. Aging in the U.S. is often portrayed as unproductive bodies dependent upon care and assistance. In Java, aging is a stage in life in which care and dependence on care is expected. Aged women realize more freedom and enhanced status in the family and community. Aged men can experience a transition to becoming an elder, learning prayers, and making speeches at weddings, funerals, and other community and civil events.

Medical anthropologists have been active in the study of disability and what is referred to presently as ableism. Armed with the cross-cultural perspective, medical anthropologists have identified some commonalities in the management of disability, but also many differences. The study of disability is centered on the study of normalcy and its' use to understand and identify impairment and disability among individuals, in families, in social groups and relations, and social situations of all kinds. Notions of "normal" are

conceptualized and applied differently depending on the social and cultural context. One concern of medical anthropologists has been the manner in which Western ideas regarding disability and the disabled are applied in other cultural contexts. For example, in the West, disability is often considered as a human rights issue. Medical anthropology of disability across cultures and societies questions the focus on the individual that is common in disability studies. Instead, medical anthropologists have found disability and the experience of to be relational, contingent, and (inter)dependent on specific social and material conditions that too often exclude full participation in society. A study of disability in western Canada found that the experience of disability is a **ritual process** as described by Victor Turner. The presence of impairment "separates" that impairment from conceptions of normality and so effectivity separating individuals who experience impairment from society as "abnormal". Learning to live with the impairment represents a "liminal" stage. Therapy and rehabilitation provide for the "re-incorporation" back into society with a new status – disabled. Finally, medical anthropology documents across societies and cultures these social facts of disability and ableism: the experience and management of disability is **intersectional**, shaped by race/ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and national location.

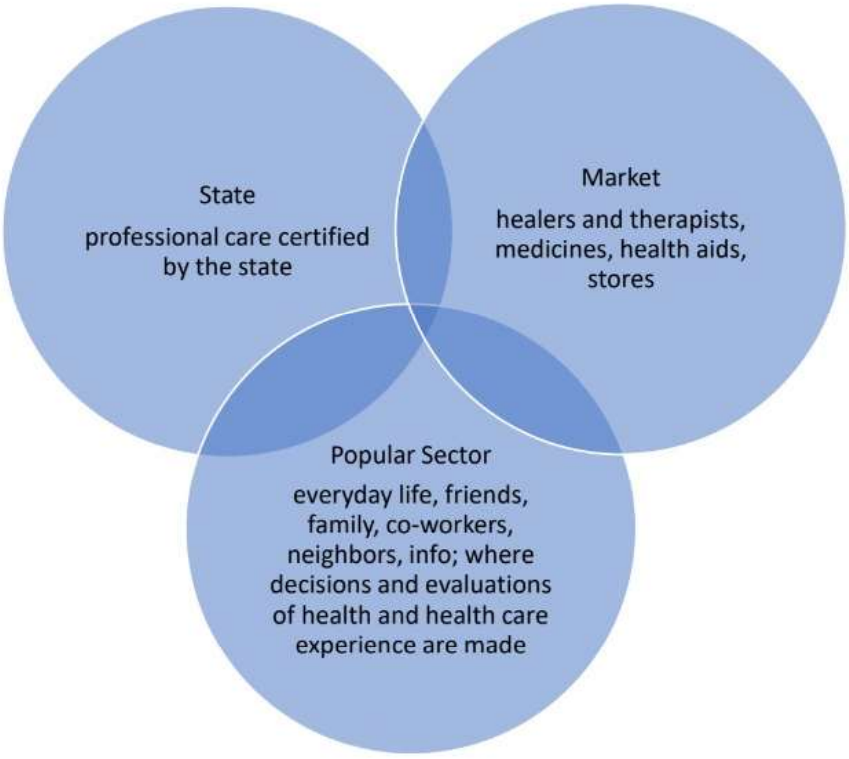


One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.openeducationalberta.ca/anth/?p=353#oembed-2

Interview with Amy Cran (Anthropology Major, Fall 2021). Recording and editing completed by Julisha Roache ('22, Anthropology).

Local Health Care Systems: Medical Pluralism

In order to fully account for local knowledge and practices relevant to health, illness, and disease, a description of the **local health care system** is useful.



An example of a local health care system model

Arthur Kleinman conceptualized the model of a local health care system based on his ethnographic work in Taiwan. In his model he has the everyday popular sector of health intersecting with the **professional sector** and the **traditional sector**. His model reflects the kinds of analysis common in the 1970s and 1980s in which developing societies were often described in transition from traditional to modern society. His analytic framework for his model drew upon modernization theory applied to the development of the

"Third World." The logic was that there is a sector of health care providers who are licensed, receive training, and operate mostly in the sphere of biomedicine and public health based on biomedicine. There are many other kinds of professional healers and therapies that have "professional" status; for example, ayurveda in India, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in China.

In order to understand the range of medical practices and perceptions that inform any local health care system, the model should reflect current conditions. In this day and age the public health of nation-states is primarily based on biomedicine. State health care providers and health institutions associated with the state – hospitals, clinics – are overwhelmingly trained in biomedicine. Rather than locating the "professional" health care in such a system, it is crucial to account for the presence of the **state**. The "traditional" sector is replaced in this model by the **market** where traditional as well as many other kinds of medicines and healers that do not fall under the state-certified processes of care can be found.

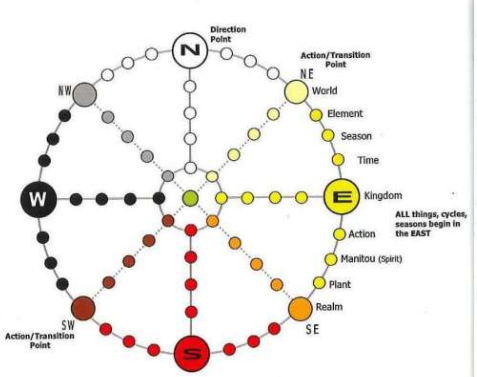
The **popular sector** is perhaps the most central sector when sickness and disease arise. This is the realm of everyday life populated with family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, as well as health "information" available among these sources – printed materials, social media, television, among others. It is in this sector that sufferers, and their relations, experience sickness episodes and make decisions about what kind of health care will provide relief. It is also in this sector that sufferers and their relations evaluate their health care decisions. The choice and evaluation of health care decisions available in the local health care system sustain the plurality of medical care, offering sufferers and their relations a range of health located in the state and market sectors that can be utilized to provide relief. This availability of a variety of medical perceptions and practices is referred to as **medical pluralism**. All health care systems present such medical pluralism.

Biomedicine, Biopower, Biopolitics, Bio-Sociality, Biological Citizenship

The current dominance of biomedicine in local health care systems have led medical anthropologists to examine medicine as a form of social control. Biomedicine teaches us to interpret ourselves, our world, and the relations between humans and nature, self and society. Biomedicine, historically anchored in the European Enlightenment is made up of what Deborah Gordon calls "tenacious assumptions" (1988, p. 19) that reflects its emergence in the Age of Reason. Biomedicine is integrated within an extensive web of institutions, political, economic and personal investments built around a "cultural model" that favors two foundational propositions: **naturalism** and **individualism**. The autonomy of nature locates sickness as natural phenomena, and the human body as nature's representative. With the Enlightenment project as an age of reason, nature is disengaged from metaphysical and spiritual connections. Once seen as sacred, nature is reformed as physical matter subject to laws. The application of reason in the form of scientific methods furthers the overall disenchantment, removing the spiritual world from a mechanism composed of physical matter obeying natural mechanistic laws rather than spiritual ones. In the process illness becomes distinguished from misfortune, divine punishment, and sin in favor of a separating body and mind as a fundamental feature of biomedicine's materialism. Real illness corresponds to physical traces that show up in the body through measures of body processes.

The Enlightenment was the milieu in which the "individual" becomes a preferred way of being in the world. The materialism of biomedicine reproduces this social and cultural change going on at the time in its classification of disease and causes. A classification system that organizes and treats specific diseases with specific causes, ironically also proposes a universal human nature, reducing "individuals" to natural forces and processes. From this perspective

a distinction crucial to the practice of medicine emerges based upon a neutral position towards "individuals" based on indifference to human purposes and relationships; this revises patients' complaints as subjective belief while observable-discoverable signs and symptoms as the sources of authoritative knowledge. The distinction of the mind– the source of belief – from the body – the source of knowledge – remains fundamental to the practice of biomedicine.



Colour = Black
Element = Water
Season = Autumn
Kingdom = Swimmers
Plant = Sage
Manitous = Bear/Fish
World = Mineral
Realm = Spiritual
Time = Adult
Gift = Courage
Action = Know
Tree Phase = Mature

Colour = Yellow
Element = Fire
Season = Spring
Kingdom = Crawlers
Time = Child
Gift = Inspiration
Plant = Tobacco
Manitous = Eagle/Snake
World = Human
Realm = Emotional
Action = See (vision)
Tree Phase = Seedling

Colour = White
Element = Air
Season = Winter
Kingdom = Flyers
Plant = Sweetgrass
Manitous = Owl/Mouse
World = Animal
Realm = Mental
Time = Elder
Gift = Wisdom
Action = Be
Tree Phase = Old

Colour = Red
Element = Earth
Season = Summer
Kingdom = Walkers
Plant = Cedar
Manitous = Wolf/Deer
World = Plants
Realm = Physical
Time = Youth
Gift = Strength
Action = Grow
Tree Phase = Sapling

The Medicine Wheel (also referred to as the Sacred Hoop) has been used by indigenous tribes in North America for both health and healing for generations. Different tribes across North America have different interpretations of the meaning of the wheel. More information can be found here.

Medicalization, and particularly bio-medicalization, has been a concern of medical anthropologists beginning with anthropological critiques of development and modernization, and continuing with portraits of suffering that take into account the role medicine plays. Medicine's intimacy with local understandings of order and

disorder, normal and abnormal that define illness and disease as well as restoration or a return to health involves recognizing, or 'labelling' these various states of being. A person is labeled in the course of these social negotiations. In general, for all medicine, medical anthropologists have documented that who is to be called ill, diseased, disabled is often determined by the individual's social position and society's norms rather than by universal and objectively defined signs and symptoms.

Medical labelling and processes of medicalization reflect the unequal power relations involved in health and medical care. These effects are referred to by Public Health and medical anthropologists as the **social determinants of health**. While the idea of disease not recognizing social differences, borders and boundaries of any kind is often evoked, the fact of the matter is that disease and its' onset are affected by differences in social position within a society, or across nations. Groups and individuals with more resources – economic, social, cultural – generally have opportunities to protect themselves from illness and disease including access to health care not available to others. Groups and individuals with less resources, power, and prestige suffer from health conditions related to their positions in society that produce suffering and illness. This is referred to by Paul Farmer as **structural violence** – when social structure itself is a pathogenic force.

Structural Violence and the Politics of Aid in Haiti

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Sarah Lyon (sarah.lyon@uky.edu)

Isaac Shearn (Isaacshearn@gmail.com)

Anthropologists interested in understanding economic inequalities often research forms of structural violence present in the communities where they work.[1] Structural violence is a form of violence in which a social structure or institution harms people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. In other words, how political and economic forces structure risk for various forms of suffering within a population. Structural violence can include things like infectious disease, hunger, and violence (torture, rape, crime, etc.).

The United States tends to focus on individuals and personal experiences. A popular narrative holds that if you work hard enough you can "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" in this country of immigrants and economic opportunity. The converse of this ideology is victim blaming: the logic is that if people are poor it is their own fault.[3] However, studying structural violence helps

1. [2]
2. [66]
3. [4]
4. [67]

us understand that for some people there simply is no getting ahead and all one can hope for is survival.

The conditions of everyday life in Haiti, which only worsened after the 2010 earthquake, are a good example of how structural violence limits individual opportunities. Haiti is the most unequal country in Latin America and the Caribbean: the richest 20 percent of its population holds more than 64 percent of its total wealth, while the poorest 20 percent hold barely one percent. The starkest contrast is between the urban and rural areas: almost 70 percent of Haiti's rural households are chronically poor (vs. 20 percent in cities), meaning they survive on less than $2 a day and lack access to basic goods and services.[5] Haiti suffers from widespread unemployment and underemployment, and more than two-thirds of people in the labor force do not have formal jobs. The population is not well educated, and more than 40 percent of the population over the age of 15 is illiterate.[7] According to the World Food Programme, more than 100,000 Haitian children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition and one in three children is stunted (or irreversibly short for their

5. [6]

6. [68]

7. [8]

8. [69]

age). Only 50 percent of households have access to safe water, and only 25 percent have adequate sanitation.[9]

On January 12, 2010, a devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck this highly unequal and impoverished nation, killing more than 160,000 people and displacing close to 1.5 million more. Because the earthquake's epicenter was near the capital city, the National Palace and the majority of Haiti's governmental offices were almost completely destroyed. The government lost an estimated 17 percent of its workforce. Other vital infrastructure, such as hospitals, communication systems, and roads, was also damaged, making it harder to respond to immediate needs after the quake.[11]

The world responded with one of its most generous outpourings of aid in recent history. By March 1, 2010, half of all U.S. citizens had donated a combined total of $1 billion for the relief effort (worldwide $2.2 billion was raised), and on March 31, 2010 international agencies pledged $5.3 billion over the next 18 months.[13] The anthropologist Mark Schuller studied the aftermath of the earthquake and the politics of humanitarianism in Haiti. He found that little of this aid ever reached Haiti's

9. [10]
10. [70]
11. [12]
12. [71]
13. [14]
14. [72]

most vulnerable people, the 1.5 million people living in the IDP (internally displaced persons) camps. Less than one percent of the aid actually was given to the Haitian government. The largest single recipient was the U.S. military (33 percent), and the majority of the aid was dispersed to foreign-run non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Haiti.

Because so little of this aid reached the people on the ground who needed it most, seven months following the disaster 40 percent of the IDP camps did not have access to water, and 30 percent did not have toilets of any kind. Only ten percent of families in the camps had a tent and the rest slept under tarps or bedsheets. Only 20 percent of the camps had education, health care, or mental health facilities on-site.[15] Schuller argues that this failure constitutes a violation of the Haitian IDP's human rights, and it is linked to a long history of exploitative relations between Haiti and the rest of the world.

Haiti is the second oldest republic in the Western Hemisphere (after the United States), having declared its independence from France in 1804. Years later, in order to earn diplomatic recognition from the French government, Haiti agreed to pay financial reparations to the powerful nation from 1825 to 1947. In order to do so, Haiti was forced to take out large loans from U.S. and

15. [16]

16. [73]

European banks at high interest rates. During the twentieth century, the country suffered at the hands of brutal dictatorships, and its foreign debts continued to increase. Schuller argues that the world system continually applied pressure to Haiti, draining its resources and forcing it into the debt bondage that kept it from developing. In the process, this system contributed to the very surplus that allowed powerful Western nations to develop.[17]

When the earthquake struck, Haiti's economy already revolved around international aid and foreign remittances sent by migrants (which represented approximately 25 percent of the gross domestic product).[19] Haiti had become a republic of NGOs that attract the nation's most educated, talented workers (because they can pay significantly higher wages than the national government, for example). Schuller argues that the NGOs constitute a form of "trickle-down imperialism" as they reproduce the world system.[21] The relief money funneled through these organizations ended up supporting a new elite class rather than the

17. [18]
18. [74]
19. [20]
20. [75]
21. [22]
22. [76]

impoverished multitudes that so desperately need the assistance.

Anthropologists have identified forms of structural inequality in countless places around the world; anthropology can be a powerful tool for addressing the pressing social issues of our times. When anthropological research is presented in an accessible and easily understood form, it can effectively encourage meaningful public conversations about questions such as how to best disperse relief aid after natural disasters.

In this way medicine medicalizes human experience. Medicalization implies a broadening and deepening of this process into all aspects of life. For example, in North America students who have difficulty paying attention, managing their impulses or completing tasks in a classroom may be diagnosed with attention deficit disorder and prescribed medication. Childbirth and menstruation are considered medical problems. Lifestyle becomes a medical risk.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://pressbooks.openeducationalberta.ca/anth/?p=353#h5p-1

Recent work in medical anthropology in regard to the unequal social relationships evident in rates and distributions of disease and illness, as well the power relations involved in health care has been

highly influenced by the work of Michel Foucault (a French philosopher). The concepts of bio-power and bio-politics have become central to understandings and descriptions of bio-medicine as a form of social control. Whether in the context of doctor-patient relations or in society at large, bio-power and bio-politics are ever present and are crucial to the applications of "modern" medicine as forms of governance. Emerging along with the "modern" nation-state, bio-power and bio-politics provide the framework for his work that focuses on the discipline of medicine as state rule. Labelling and medicalization represent on the ground processes fostering the ideologies of bio-power and bio-politics within any society or culture.

Bio-politics is founded upon the reconceptualization of society as a "population." Rather than conceptualizing society as an assemblage of social roles and statuses – noble and commoner for example – society is seen vitally as an assemblage of demographic variables. Rates and distributions of disease and health, life expectancy, mortality, birth, and the conditions around the variables was a historical moment in which "life was brought into the realm of explicit calculations" (1978, p. 143). Experts and expert systems become central players in the management of a citizenry as an economic system, directing the power of governance into the intimate, everyday lives of groups and individuals. Biology becomes increasingly important in social identification by experts and expert systems, but also for people in general. Collective life becomes an object of calculation and management and a target of power.

Bio-power is the technique involved in establishing and maintaining bio-politics. Bio-power according to Foucault is "what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life" (1990, p. 143). Labelling and medicalization are features of bio-power. In the process scientific concepts of health and normality are internalized in clinics, hospitals, and homes – scientific concepts of health and normality become central forces in local health care systems. And similar

to bio-politics scientific concepts of health and normality are administered by professional groups on the basis of their claim to scientific knowledge. The result is the linking of the human body to organized knowledge in order to achieve social control–the link between the individual and social structures.

Foucault argues that power is not only repressive, but also productive. **Bio-sociality** emerges from the conditions of bio-politics, representing the use of biology as a form of social identification in the politics of life. Rose and Novas (2005) note, "while citizenship has long had a biological dimension, a new kind of biological citizenship is taking shape in the age of rapid biological discovery, genomics, biotechnological fabrication, and biomedicine. New subjectivities, new politics, and new ethics are shaping today's biological citizens…" (p. 36). For example, when HIV/AIDS appeared as a significant public health problem, sufferers began demanding forms of care and treatment relevant to the prevailing conditions of the disease at that time. HIV/AIDS in North America in the 1980's afflicted men who have sex with men (MSM), and it was this group that organized around the HIV/AIDS crisis to politically engage local and federal governments to provide care referred to as **harm reduction**. These political efforts led to the establishment of this mode of health care and treatment that took into account the kinds of "risks" sufferers engage in their daily lives. When the virus became a public health problem associated with drug use, particularly intravenous drug use, the harm reduction approach was/is used to make risky behaviors safer. So condom use campaigns, needle exchange programs, safe injection sites, and so forth became medical approaches to ensure safety of individual sufferers and the public. The process led to the forging of a collective identity under emergent categories of biomedicine and other allied sciences. The forging of a collective identity as HIV/AIDS among treatments, treatment activists, human rights advocates, and programs of varying types (faith-based to multi-national development organizations), is an example of the impact of

biosociality and advocating with the language of human rights on a global scale as it unfolds in local places.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.openeducationalberta.ca/anth/?p=353#oembed-3

Interview with Kathleen Mah ('22, Anthropology) about her undergraduate Honor's Thesis, "For the Greater Good" 99.8% Free and the Expendable 0.2%: Freedom Fighters and the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Recording and editing completed by Julisha Roache ('22, Anthropology).*

Global/Local Mental Health

Since the early days of the discipline, anthropologists have noted that definitions of what is normal and abnormal vary greatly across societies and cultures. Ruth Benedict noted that behavior and states of mind determined abnormal for one group might be seen as normal in another (1934). A person suffering from schizophrenia might be seen as severely ill and in need of medical care while in another context the same behavior may be seen as evidence of special powers – in the former the person is a patient, in the latter a shaman. Similar to the perspective of medical anthropologists on biomedicine simply as another ethnomedicine, psychological anthropologists explore "psychology" as ethnopsychologies assembled in particular contexts and collectivities. Psychological anthropologists observe and document local knowledge regarding the mind, self, body, and emotion as topics in ethnographic studies.

The psychological anthropologist is interested in the actual psychological functioning and subjective life of persons in their own milieu. For example, some Javanese integrate mind, self, body, and emotion in a relationship – the relationship between the outer world (lahir) and the inner world (batin). A great deal of effort by Javanese persons is afforded to keeping these two realms in a moderate equilibrium that is essential for the refined person and demeanor (halus). When moderation is usurped by excess, there is the potential for a coarseness in person and demeanor (kasar). So, the ethnopsychological framework for many Javanese is a daily balancing act between forces of the outer and inner realms managed by the self in relations to others. This understanding is necessary for understanding local practices and perceptions when considering mental health.

The conception of mental health continues the mind-body dualism central to biomedicine. And unlike ethnopsychology, mental health is informed by the universalizing across the human species in the same way biomedicine attends to the body, illness, disease, and health. In fact, the increasing global concern with mental health is a symptom of processes of globalization taking place today. Globalization is often described as the expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up and deepening impact of interregional flows and patterns of social interaction that have shifted and transformed the scale of human social organization, linking distant communities and expanding the reach of power relations across the world's major regions and continents. Perhaps the most important instrument involved in the spread of mental health across the globe is the DSM. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is a guidebook widely used by mental health professionals around the world. Based on symptom criteria, diagnostic categories are derived from majority populations, particularly those found in hospitals or specialty psychiatric clinics, and tend to support the impressions that such expressions of illness are universal. The use of the DSM around the world has led to the universalizing of state sector mental health diagnosis and care. The

unevenness of globalization ensures that its' use and the various interpretations of its' contents is far from a universal process experienced uniformly across the entire planet. Nevertheless, the impact of the DSM classification system on individual and collective perceptions of mental health is without question.

For the medical anthropologist interested in ethnographic approaches to the study of mental health, a critical approach begins with emphasizing local experiences of symptoms and the care and management involved with such episodes. For example, Byron Good examined the ethnographic work on schizophrenia from nine countries. He found that outcome varied enormously, with sufferers in developing countries doing far better than those in the Global North. The DSM advises that schizophrenia is a chronic illness with severe persisting symptoms leading to an almost certain decline over time. However, in much of the Global South there are high rates of recovery. Among the various ethnographic portraits of schizophrenia, Good found that some sufferers have occasional acute episodes followed by long periods of symptom management, some have no improvement, and others long trajectory of increasing debilitating symptoms. In spite of the variation, it was clear that improving patients were generally found in Global North.

Medical and psychological anthropologists concerned with mental health argue that cultural interpretations of mental illness held by members of a society or social group strongly influence their response to persons who are ill –and both directly and indirectly influence the course of illness. Good's work on schizophrenia is a wonderful example of the value of ethnographic and anthropological renderings of mental health in local contexts. This example illustrates that local knowledge and cultural interpretations shape both social response and personal experience.

Critical Global-Public Health

Global health, in general, implies consideration of the health needs of the people of the whole planet above the concerns of particular nations. The term "global" is also associated with the growing importance of actors beyond governmental or intergovernmental organizations and agencies — for example, the media, internationally influential foundations, nongovernmental organizations, and transnational corporations. Logically, the terms "international," "intergovernmental," and "global" need not be mutually exclusive and in fact can be understood as complementary. Thus, we could say that WHO is an intergovernmental agency that exercises international functions with the goal of improving global health.

Critical global health directs our attention from the geographic markers of global health towards questions of world making and critical social theory. Critical global health includes vectors of disease transmission, distributions of scientific and technological resources, and available health opportunities within a framework that is concerned with the social production of health. The focus is not only on people, forms of social organization, and the influence of culture, but on how local and global institutions fuel visibility and invisibility.

Paul Farmer argues that social inequality, locally or globally situated is a pathogenic force, and is at the heart of structural violence. From his work on HIV/AIDS in Haiti, Farmer concludes that the emergence and persistence of epidemics in Haiti (HIV/TB) are rooted in enduring effects of European colonial expansion in the New World and in the slavery and racism with which it is associated. From this perspective a virus is seen as a social disease in addition to being an infectious disease. Farmer shows that early theories in the United States assumed the the virus came from voodoo blood rituals and animal sacrifice. In fact, the emergence of the virus is a story of primarily poor Haitian men engaging in sex

work. They then transmitted the virus to their female partners, and through affective and economic connections, HIV became rapidly entrenched in Haitian urban slums and spread to smaller cities and villages. This example highlights the impact of globalization as "the process of increasing economic, political, and social interdependence and integration as capital, goods, persons, concepts, images, ideas and values cross state boundaries" (Yach & Becher, 1998, p. 735).



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.openeducationalberta.ca/anth/?p=353#oembed-4

The Water of Ayolé by Sandra Nichols (1988)

Hazards and disasters are challenges to the structure and organization of society. Medical anthropologists focus on the behavior of individuals and groups in the various stages of disaster impact and aftermath. In the spirit of holism medical anthropologists explore the local assemblages of religion, ritual, technology, economy, politics, patterns of cooperation and conflict that emerge during disruptive times. Medical anthropologists have participated in assessing and monitoring the quality of interaction between victims, aid personnel, conflictive relations for mobilization, and social responses of vulnerable populations (i.e. elderly and children) with a keen eye towards cultural expressions of sociopsychological stress. The response to the Ebola outbreak in western Africa included anthropologists. As the outbreak unfolded, anthropologists as well as public health personnel became aware of the role funerals played in the spread of EVD. The corpse is often still highly infectious. Cases have been reported in which the

virus has been transmitted to mourners at funerals and especially to those involved in preparing the body for burial. Thus, it is important to understand Mende village burial practices. Mourners may contract the disease by touching the corpse to express sympathy or say farewell or by coming into contact with those who have nursed an Ebola patient. In other cases, it is the movement of the corpse between villages that is likely to pose a transmission risk to neighboring communities. This risk might occur when a woman relocated upon marriage to her husband's village dies, and is transported to her home village to be interred.

Disasters and hazards often lead to social change and development. New adjustments and relationships can develop. Rapid local, state, national and international aid are often followed by construction process, which can evolve into development programs. In the process the experts and their work become permanent fixtures in the social landscape.

References

Foucault, M. (1978). History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: An Introduction. New York: Vintage.

Foucault, M. (1990). The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction. Translated by R. Hurley. New York: Vintage Books.

Gordon, D.R. (1988). Tenacious Assumptions in Western Medicine. In *Biomedicine Examined*, ed 1. Edited by Margaret M. Lock and Deborah R. Gordon, p. 15-56. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Rose, N., & Novas, C. (2005). Biological citizenship. In *Global assemblages: Technology, politics and ethics as*

anthropological problems. Edited by Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier, 439–463. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Yach, D. and Bettcher, D. (1998). The Globalization of Public Health, I: Threats and Opportunities. *American Journal of Public Health*, 88, p. 735-338.

20. Advice from Anthropology Students

Advice from Anthropology Students, for Anthropology Students

Interview and editing completed by Julisha Roache ('22, Anthropology)



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.openeducationalberta.ca/anth/?p=325#oembed-1

PART VIII

ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY: GLOBALIZATION, NEOLIBERALISM, THE ANTHROPOCENE

21. Globalization and Living in the Anthropocene

"Globalization and Living in the Anthropocene"

from

Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition

Lauren Miller Griffith (lauren.griffith@ttu.edu)
Jonathan S. Marion (marion@uark.edu)
Christian T. Palmer (ctpalmer@hawaii.edu)

OVERVIEW AND EARLY GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is a word commonly used in public discourse, but it is often loosely defined in today's society (much like the word "culture" itself). First appearing in the English language in the 1940s, the term "globalization" is now commonplace and is used to discuss the circulation of goods, the fast and furious exchange of ideas,

and the movement of people.[1] Despite its common use, it seems that the many people using the term are often not defining it in the same way. Some treat globalization as simply an economic issue while others focus more on the social and political aspects. What is clear, however, is that globalization has influenced many different facets of contemporary social life. This actually makes globalization an ideal topic of study for anthropologists, who pride themselves on taking a holistic approach to culture (see the Development of Anthropological Ideas chapter). For our purposes, we adopt political scientist Manfred Steger's definition of globalization: "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa."[2]

It is challenging to determine precisely when globalization began. Although some people discuss globalization as if it was an entirely new process without historical antecedents, in truth its precursors have been going on for a very long time. In this chapter, we argue that the distinguishing feature of globalization in the contemporary era is the speed, rather than the scope, of global interactions. Early modern technological innovations hastened globalization.[3] For instance, the invention of the wheel created a need for permanent roads that would facilitate transport of animal drawn carts. These wheeled vehicles increased people's mobility, which in turn facilitated the sharing of both goods and ideas. Even before the invention of the wheel, the creation of written communication

1. Manfred Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
2. Steger, *Globalization*, 13.
3. Steger, *Globalization*.

systems allowed ideas to be shared between people in distant locations.

Certainly extensive empires have existed at various times throughout human history, including Chinese dynasties (the Han dynasty, 206 BCE-220 CE, for instance, reached the same size the Roman Empire achieved much later); the Ottoman Empire, and the Roman Empire. Most recently in world history, European colonial expansion into Africa, Asia and the Americas marked another landmark of globalization. As discussed in the Development of Anthropological Ideas chapter, *colonialism* refers to the political, social, economic, and cultural domination of a territory and its people by a foreign power for an extended period of time. Technically, colonialism can be practiced by any group that is powerful enough to subdue other groups—and this certainly would be an accurate term for Ottoman and Roman imperial expansion—but as a term, colonialism is typically associated with the actions of European countries starting in the 1500s and lasting through the 1900s. During this period, European colonial powers divvied up "unclaimed" land with little regard for ethnic groups who already lived in those places, their political structures, belief systems, or lifeways. By 1914, European nations ruled more than 85 percent of the world, and it is not by accident that the image of the world most often seen on conventional maps continues to be very Eurocentric in its orientation (see map).

Colonialism in the Americas was the result of European conquest of newly "discovered" territories during the Age of Exploration. Columbus was likely not the first explorer to reach the Americas, but his "discovery" intensified Europeans' desires to colonize this "new" territory. European leaders began expanding their spheres of influence in Europe before turning their attention to lands further afield; the successes they had in colonizing nearby lands, amplified by a growing demand for trade items found in "the Orient," fueled their enthusiasm for exploration outside the region. The Catholic Church also supported this economically motivated mission, as it

coincided with a weakening of their religious-stronghold in places like England, Germany, and France.

One of the most devastating features of the colonial period was the forced labor of both indigenous Americans and Africans who were enslaved and shipped off as chattel. Between 1525 and 1866, 12.5 million slaves were sent to the New World from Africa. Treated as chattel, only 10.7 million Africans survived until arriving in the Americas. The U.S. imported approximately 450,000 of these slaves. It is not by coincidence that the ethically irredeemable shipment of slaves to the Americas corresponded to massive shipments of goods to Europe and down the west coast of Africa. As far as the total scope of international flows, however, European colonialism pales in comparison to the scope of globalization that has transpired since the 1990s.

Contemporary globalization, at least in terms of economics, is perhaps best pinpointed as coinciding with the conclusion of World War II and the Bretton Woods Conference.[4] The agreements made at the Bretton Woods Conference led to the creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which later became the World Bank (WB). It also laid the groundwork for the World Trade Organization (WTO). Taken together, these three organizations have had a tremendous role in accelerating globalization and in shaping the lives of people in the developing world. The very idea of governing bodies like the United Nations, or regulatory institutions like the IMF and WB, that exist outside the confines of a specific nation-state—now widely referenced as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)—contributes to undermining local sovereignty.[5] Although local, regional, and national identities and

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

affiliations retain salience in the global era, their importance has shifted relative to the growing sense many people have of being citizens of the world.

THE ACCELERATION OF GLOBALIZATION

The 5 "Scapes" of Globalization

As we have already established, globalization refers to the increasing pace and scope of interconnections crisscrossing the globe. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has discussed this in terms of five specific "scapes" or flows: ethnoscapes, technoscapes, ideoscapes, financescapes, and mediascapes. Thinking of globalization in terms of the people, things, and ideas that flow across national boundaries is a productive framework for understanding the shifting social landscapes in which contemporary people are often embedded in their daily lives. Questions about where people migrate, their reasons for migration, the pace at which they travel, the ways their lives change as a result of their travels, and how their original communities change can all be addressed within this framework. Questions about goods and ideas that travel without the accompaniment of human agents can also be answered using Appadurai's notion of scapes.

Ethnoscape refers to the flow of people across boundaries. While people such as labor migrants or refugees (see case study below) travel out of necessity or in search of better opportunities for themselves and their families, leisure travelers are also part of this scape. The World Tourism Organization, a specialized branch of the United Nations, argues that tourism is one of the fastest growing commercial sectors and that approximately one in eleven jobs is

related to tourism in some way.[6] Tourism typically puts people from developed parts of the world in contact with people in the developing world, which creates both opportunities and challenges for all involved. While there is the potential for tourists to be positively affected by their experiences with "the Other" while travelling, the tourism industry has also received its share of criticisms. Individuals from wealthier countries like the U.S., even if they are not wealthy themselves by the standards of the United States, are able to indulge in luxuries while traveling abroad in poorer nations like those found in the Caribbean. There is a fine line between a) tourists expecting service while on vacation and b) tourists treating local people like *servants*. This latter scenario exemplifies the unequal power relationships that develop in these kinds of situations, and such power relationships concern responsible social scientists.[7]

Technoscape refers to flows of technology. Apple's iPhone is just one example of how the movement of technologies across boundaries can radically affect day-to-day life for people all along the commodity chain. Sales records are surpassed with each release of a new iPhone, with lines of customers spilling out of Apple stores and snaking around the block. Demand for this new product drives a fast and furious pace of production. Workers who are struggling to keep up with demand are subjected to labor conditions most iPhone users would find abhorrent; some even commit suicide as

6. United Nations World Tourism Organization, "Why Tourism," http://www2.unwto.org/content/why-tourism

7. To be fair, responsible policy makers and businesses, local communities, and travelers themselves may also be concerned with these issues.

a result. The revenue associated with the production and export of technological goods is drastically altering the international distribution of wealth. As the pace of technological innovation increases, so does the flow of technology. This is not, of course, an entirely new phenomenon; earlier technologies have also drastically and irrevocably changed the human experience. For example, the large-scale production and distribution of the printing press throughout Europe (and beyond) dramatically changed the ways in which people thought of themselves—as members not only of local communities, but of national communities as well.[8]

Ideoscape refers to the flow of ideas. This can be small-scale, such as an individual posting her or his personal views on Facebook for public consumption, or it can be larger and more systematic. Missionaries provide a key example. Christian missionaries to the Amazon region made it their explicit goal to spread their religious doctrines. As the experiences of missionary-turned-anthropologist Daniel Everett show, however, local people do not necessarily interpret the ideas they are brought in the way missionaries expect.[9] In addition to the fact that all people have agency to accept, reject, or adapt the ideologies that are introduced to or imposed on them (see syncretism below). The structure of the

8. See Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

9. Daniel L. Everett, *Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009).

language spoken by the Pirahã makes it difficult to provide direct translations of the gospel.[10]

Financescape refers to the flow of money across political borders. Like the other flows discussed by Appadurai, this phenomenon has been occurring for centuries. The Spanish, for example, conscripted indigenous laborers to mine the silver veins of the Potosí mines of Bolivia. The vast riches extracted from this region were used to pay Spain's debts in northern Europe. The pace of the global transfer of money has only accelerated and today transactions in the New York Stock Exchange, the Nikkei index, and other such finance hubs have nearly immediate effects on economies around the world.

Mediascape refers to the flow of media across borders. In earlier historic periods, it could take weeks or even months for entertainment and education content to travel from one location to another. From the telegraph to the telephone, and now the Internet (and myriad other digital communication technologies), media are far more easily and rapidly shared regardless of geographic borders. For example, Brazilian telenovelas may provide entertainment on long-distance African bus trips, Bollywood films are shown in Canadian cinemas, and people from around the world regularly watch mega-events such as the World Cup and the Olympics from wherever they may live.

While the five scapes defined by Appadurai provide useful tools for thinking about these various forms of circulation, disentangling them in this way can also be misleading. Ultimately, the phenomena studied by most anthropologists will involve more than one of these scapes. Take clothing for instance. Kelsey Timmerman, an author

10. Daniel L. Everett, "What Does Pirahã Grammar Have to Teach Us About Human Language and the Mind?" *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science* 3 no. 6 (2012): 555-63.

whose undergraduate concentration was in anthropology, was inspired to find out more about the lives of the people who made his clothing.[11] In a single day, he found, the average American might be wearing clothes made in Honduras, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and China. Something as seemingly simple as a T-shirt can actually involve all five of Appadurai's scapes. The transnational corporations responsible for the production of these shirts themselves are part of capitalism, an idea which has become part of the international ideoscape. The financescape is altered by a company in the U.S. contracting a production facility in another country where labor costs are cheaper. The equipment needed to create these T-shirts is purchased and delivered to the production facility, thus altering the technoscape. The ethnoscape is affected by individuals migrating from their homes in rural villages to city centers, often disrupting traditional residence patterns in the process. Finally, the mediascape is involved in the marketing of these T-shirts.

GLOBALIZATION AND NEOLIBERALISM

Latin America provides a good example of how the shift from colonialism to neoliberalism has been disseminated through and exacerbated by globalization. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Latin American colonies' independence from Spain and Portugal was secure, but the relations of power that prevailed during the colonial period had largely been replicated with local elites controlling the means of production. During this period,

11. Kelsey Timmerman, *Where Am I Wearing?* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2012).

citizens individually and collectively endeavored to establish a new national identity. Despite nominal commitments to democracy throughout the region, patron/client relationships functioned as the primary political mechanism. Internal divisions ran deep in many Latin American countries, with the supporters (or clients) of rival elites periodically drawn into violent contests for rule on behalf of their patrons. In the last decade of the 1800s and the first decade of the 1900s, people in Latin America began to question the right of the elites to rule, as well as the hidden costs of modernization. Peasant uprisings, like the one that took place at Canudus in Brazil in 1896, were evidence of the shifting political framework. People also saw the imperialistic tendencies of the U.S. as a negative force of modernization which they hoped to avoid. Together, this led to a situation in which people in Latin America sought a national identity that resonated with their sense of self.

During this same period there was a slight but significant change in the economic structure of the region. The economy was still based on exports of agriculture and natural resources like minerals, and the profits remained in the hands of the elite. What was new, however, was the introduction and modest growth of manufacturing in the cities, which created new job opportunities. Economic diversification led to a more complex class structure and an emerging middle class. Unfortunately, this period of relative prosperity and stability soon ended. Because of the plentiful natural resources and the captive labor source "available" for exploitation in Latin America, wealthy landowners were able to undersell their European competitors on agricultural products and provide "exotic" minerals. The privileged position of Latin American landowner compared to European farmers led to widespread poverty among farmers in Europe, which led to out-migration and political instability in Europe. As locally born Latin American peasants migrated from the countryside to the cities *and* the cities filled with European immigrants, the landowning elite began to lose control, or at least the kind of power they used to hold over the farmers who worked their land and had no other work options.

While city living provided certain opportunities, it also introduced new challenges. In the city, for instance, people rarely had access to land for subsistence agriculture. This made them far more vulnerable to economic fluctuations, and the vulnerability of city living necessitated the adoption of new political philosophies. Urban poverty and desperation created a climate in which many people found socialist philosophies appealing, starting as early as the 1920s in some places like Brazil. Initially, union leaders and European immigrants who spread socialist ideas among the urban poor were punished by the state and often deported. Eventually such repressive tactics proved insufficient to curtail the swelling disruptions caused by strikes and related actions by the unions. Faced with a new political reality, the elite co-opted the public rhetoric of the urban masses. Realizing the need to cast themselves as allies to the urban workforce, the elites ushered in a period of modest reform with more protection for workers.

During this period, and as an extension of their work-related activism, the middle class also clamored for expansions of the social services provided by the state. Pressure from the middle class for more social services for citizens unfortunately played into growing xenophobia (fear of foreigners) resulting from the immigration of so many foreigners *and* faulty ideas about racial superiority communicated through a growing discourse of nationalism. In some places, the elites aligned with the middle classes if they saw it as politically advantageous. In other places, however, elites resisted incorporating the middle classes into the ruling structure and the elites' power ultimately was wrested away though military coups. While emerging leaders from the middle class continued relying on the export economic model, they directed a greater percentage of the profits back into social programs. Only after the stock market crash of the 1930s—and the resulting global recession—did those in power start to question the export model.

In the early part of the 1900s, Latin American countries largely supported free trade because they believed they had a competitive advantage. They believed that by producing the products their

country/region was best suited to produce they would prosper on the world market. However, changing world circumstances meant that Latin American countries soon lost their advantage; average family size in industrialized countries began to decrease, lowering demand for Latin American commodities. When other countries with similar climates and topography began to grow the same crops, a global oversupply of agricultural products led to lower prices and worsened the decline of Latin America's financial status in the world market.

This economic downturn was amplified by the loss of British hegemony after World War II. Before the war, Great Britain and Latin America had enjoyed a stable exchange relationship with Latin America sending agricultural goods to Great Britain and the British sending manufactured goods to Latin America. As the U.S. rose in global power, Americans looked to Latin America as a new market for U.S. manufactured goods. In contrast to Great Britain though, the U.S. did not need to import Latin American agricultural goods because the U.S. produced enough of its own, production that was further protected by high import tariffs. Even if a consumer wanted to buy Latin American commodities, the commodities would be more expensive than domestic ones—even if actual costs were lower. Overall, Latin America sold its agricultural goods to Europe, including Great Britain, but Latin American exporters had to accept lower prices than ever before.

The United States' economic strategy toward Latin America was different than Great Britain's had been. For those commodities that could not be produced in the U.S., like bananas, U.S. companies went to Latin America so they could directly control the means of production. Although these commodities were grown and/or produced *in* Latin America, the profits were taken by foreign companies rather than local ones. This same process also happened with mining interests like tin and copper; U.S. companies purchased the mines in order to extract as much profit as possible. American companies were in a position to exploit the natural resources of these countries because the U.S. had the financial capital local

communities lacked *and* the technological expertise needed to sustain these industries. This pattern curtailed the rate of economic growth throughout Latin America as well as in other regions where similar patterns developed.

The late 1920s through the 1950s saw many Latin American countries turning to nationalism—often through force—as both a cultural movement and an economic strategy. The middle classes were in a favor of curtailing the export economy that had been preferred by the elites, but did not have the political clout to win elections. Indeed, their agenda was regularly blocked by the elites who used their influence (i.e. with their clients) to press their interests, especially in the rural areas. With time, however, middle class men increasingly came to occupy military officer positions and used their newfound authority to put nationalist leaders in the presidencies. Nationalists argued that an over-dependence on agriculture had led to Latin America's vulnerable position in the international economy and called for a build-up of industry. They hoped to start producing the goods that they had been importing from the U.S. and Europe. Their goal: industrial self-sufficiency.

The state was instrumental in this economic reorganization, both helping people buy local goods and discouraging them from buying foreign goods. Doing this was far from as easy as it may sound. The state imposed high duties on goods destined for the export market in order to entice producers to sell their goods at home. At the same time, the state imposed high tariffs on the imports they wanted to replace with local products. With time (and struggle) these measures had their intended effects, making the locally produced goods comparatively more affordable—and therefore appealing—to local consumers.

As already noted, developing factories required capital and technological expertise from abroad, which in turn made the goods produced much more expensive. To help people afford such expensive goods, the state printed more money, generating massive inflation. (In some places this inflation would eventually reach 2,000 percent!) The combination of chronic inflation with high foreign

debt emerged as an enduring problem in Latin America and other parts of the Global South. Countries crippled by high inflation and debt have turned to international institutions like the IMF and WB for relief and while the intentions may be good, borrowing money from these global institutions always comes with strings attached. When a country accepts a loan from the IMF or the WB, for instance, they must agree to a number of conditions such as privatizing state enterprises (see the case study on Bolivia's water crisis, below) and cutting spending on social services like healthcare and education. Borrowing countries are also required to adopt a number of policies intended to encourage free trade, such as the reduction or elimination of tariffs on imported goods and subsidies for domestically produced goods. Policies are put into place to encourage foreign investment. Transnational corporations have now reached the point that many of them rival nations in terms of revenue. In fact, as of 2009, "forty-four of the world's hundred largest economies are corporations."[12] It is an understatement to note that the policies forced on countries by lenders are often disruptive—if not entirely destructive—of locally preferred lifeways and preferences. Although the IMF and WB measures are intended to spark economic growth, the populace often winds up suffering in the wake of these changes. Colonialism has given way to a neocolonialism in which economic force achieves what used to require military force with transnational corporations benefiting from the exploitation of poorer nations.

12. Steger, *Globalization*, 54.

Case Study: Privatization and Bolivia's Water Crisis

In 2000, Bolivians in the city of Cochabamba took to the streets to protest the exploitative practices of a transnational company that had won the right to provide water services in the city.[13] Anti-globalization activists celebrated this victory of mostly poor mestizo and indigenous people over capitalist giants, but the situation on the ground today is more complicated.

Water is one of the most essential elements on this planet. So how is it that a foreign company was given the right to determine who would have access to Bolivian water supplies and what the water would cost? The answer serves to highlight the fact that many former colonies like Bolivia have existed in a perpetual state of subordination to global superpowers. When Bolivia was a colony, Spain claimed the silver and other precious commodities that could be extracted from Bolivia's landscape, but after Bolivia became independent structural adjustment policies mandated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank

13. This case study is based on the work of Nicole Fabricant and Kathryn Hicks, "Bolivia's Next Water War: Historicizing the Struggles over Access to Water Resources in the Twenty-First Century" *Radical History Review* 116 (2013): 130-45.

paved the way for foreign companies to plunder the country's natural resources. In other words, colonial style relationships have been replicated in a global system that forces impoverished countries to sell resources to satisfy creditors; "resource extraction is facilitated by debt relations."[14]

Like many countries in the Global South, Bolivia is deep in debt. A failed program of social reforms, coupled with government corruption, was worsened by a severe drought affecting Bolivian agriculture. In order to pay its debts in the 1980s, Bolivia agreed to structural adjustments mandated by the conditions of the country's World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans. One of the mandates of these loans was privatization of state-run enterprises like the water system. Proponents of privatizing such resources argue that the efficiency associated with for-profit businesses will also serve to conserve precious natural resources. Some have gone so far as to suggest that increases in water prices would help customers better grasp the preciousness of water and thereby encourage conservation. Of course, if customers conserve water too much the company managing water delivery will fail to make a profit, thus initiating a dangerous cycle. When companies anticipate that they will not see a return on their investment in infrastructure, they simply refuse to extend services to certain areas of the community.

14. Ibid., 131.

What made the privatization of water in Bolivia so disastrous for the people of urban areas like Cochabamba was the rapid population growth they experienced starting in the latter half of the twentieth century (growth that continues in the present). Population pressures layered on top of the scarcity of water in the Bolivian natural environment makes access to potable water a perennial concern. Migration to urban areas was hastened by many different factors including land reform, privatization of mines and resultant layoffs, and severe droughts. This influx of migrants put pressure on urban infrastructure. To make matters worse, climate change led to a decline in the amount of surface water available. In 2015, Lake Poopó, the second largest lake in Bolivia, went dry and researchers are doubtful it will ever fully recover (see Figure 3).[15]

15. Thomson Reuters, "Lake Poopo, Bolivia's 2nd-Largest Lake, Dries Up" December 18, 2015, http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/lake-poopo-bolivia-dries-up-1.3371359.



Figure 3: A fishing boat is stranded on the shrinking Lake Poopó, 2006.

In Cochabamba, organizing began in late 1999. Community members formed an organization called Coordinator for the Defense of Water and for Life, which was run using a direct form of democracy wherein everyone had an equal voice. This was empowering for peasants who were accustomed to being silenced and ignored in a centuries-old social hierarchy. This organization, in contrast, coordinated actions that cut across ethnic and class lines. As the situation came to a head, activists blockaded the roads in and out of the city and riot police were brought in from the capital. After several days of confrontations between the people and the military, local activists

ousted the transnational company and reclaimed their water source.

Despite local's reclaiming control, however, they still lacked the infrastructure needed to effectively deliver what was once again "their" water. This forced them to look to international donors for assistance, which could recreate the very situation against which they so recently fought. Access to increasingly scarce water supplies is a growing problem. For example, plans to seize surface water from lakes creates conflicts with rural peasants who depend on these water sources for agricultural purposes. Unfortunately, such problems have emerged in many other places as well (such as throughout Africa and the Middle East), and are increasing in prevalence and severity amidst ongoing climate change. The question of whether or not water is a human right remains one that is heatedly debated by activists, CEOs, and others. (See a discussion of the position taken by Nestlé Chairman Peter Brabeck, who argues for the privatization of water, a position clearly at odds with the position taken by the United Nations General Assembly which, in 2010, recognized water and sanitation as human rights.)

LIVING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Rising frequency and global attention to natural disasters reminds us that we live on a planet where the climate—winds, precipitation,

weather, temperatures—is being modified by the collective impact of the human species. Scientists have largely identified what needs to be done to address many of the world's pressing environmental problems, but few of the recommended changes have been adopted, thwarted by political, cultural, and economic forces. Anthropologists' approach is holistic; they seek to simultaneously understand all of the interactions of political, cultural, and economic factors to fully explore the complexity of human-environmental interactions; anthropology provides a good place to start to understand and begin to address some of the most important questions facing our species. For example, how can we provide for basic human needs while not sacrificing the welfare of other species? Why do many people say that they care about protecting the environment but then do nothing about it? What political, economic, and cultural factors are prohibiting world leaders from agreeing on solutions to global environmental challenges? To answer such questions, we must understand how humans think and act as groups, our socially and culturally mediated ways of interacting with each other, other species, and the world around us.

In many ways, anthropology as a discipline is only now starting to address these questions. In December 2014, Bruno Latour, a French anthropologist, spoke to a standing-room-only audience at the American Anthropological Association annual meeting in Washington, D.C., to discuss the relationship between the Anthropocene and anthropology.[16] Anthropocene is a term used to describe the period (or epoch) in geological time in which the effects of human activities have altered the fundamental geochemical cycles of the earth as a result of converting forests into fields and pastures and burning oil, gas, and coal on a large scale. Because human activities have changed the earth's atmosphere,

16. [17]

17. [1]

anthropologists can make important contributions to studies of geology, chemistry, and meteorology by considering the effects of humans and their cultural systems. As Latour noted, the discipline of anthropology is uniquely qualified to provide insight into key components of current environmental crises by determining the reasons behind choices various groups of humans make, bridging the social and natural sciences, and studying contradictions between cultural universals (traits all humans have in common) and particularities (interesting cultural differences). Environmental anthropology is an exciting subfield that will grow in importance as questions of environmental sustainability become increasingly central to scientific and popular conversations about the future of our species and the planet.

Humans and the Environment

If we think about anthropology from the classic four-field approach, which includes both physical anthropology and archaeology, many of the questions with which those disciplines have historically wrestled were related to our species' long-term relationship with the environment. Around two million years ago, climate changes decreased the amount of forest and expanded grasslands in Africa, which led to the early Hominin radiation (the geographic expansion of multiple Hominin species). It also led hominin species to walk upright, which freed their hands to make and use tools. Subsequent climate changes, particularly expansions and contractions of glaciers associated with ice ages, also contributed to *Homo sapiens* expanding to new parts of the globe.

Fast-forwarding to the beginning of human agriculture roughly 10,000 years ago, we can see how the global expansion of *Homo sapiens* and their first permanent settlements and urban centers led to the development of agriculture, a profound new way of interacting with the environment. The ability of early humans to

shape the landscape, first by simply encouraging wild plants to grow and later by planting and irrigating crops and domesticating plants and animals, set humans on the path toward our current problematic relationship with the planet. Archaeologists' questions about human diets, tools, and architecture inevitably explore how ancient civilizations interacted with their environments.

Many archaeologists credit increased productivity that came with agriculture as the foundation of civilization, allowing humans to live in larger settlements, specialize in craft production, and develop social hierarchies and eventually math, writing, and science. From this perspective, the seeds of social complexity were contained within the first grains domesticated in the hills surrounding the Fertile Crescent. Others have questioned the idea that the effects of agriculture were purely beneficial. Marshall Sahlins noted that forager societies were affluent not because they had everything, but because they could easily meet their basic needs of food, shelter, and sociality. Others have looked at the advances in science, medicine, and communication technology and disagreed with Sahlins, arguing that we are better off with the developments brought by agriculture. Sahlins' critique of agriculture (and subsequently of civilization) should not be seen as a suggestion to deindustrialize; rather, it is a challenge to assumptions that Western civilization and its technological developments necessarily represent improvements for human societies. Perhaps the strongest argument against capitalism and industrialization is the real possibility of environmental collapse that those systems have brought.

Sahlins' analysis calls into question the idea that humans as a species are necessarily progressing through history and encourages us to think about how "necessities" are culturally constructed. Do we really need cars or cell phones to be happy? How about books and vaccines? Because many of our innovations in technology, agriculture, and transportation have come at the expense of the natural systems that support us, we need to think about human "progress" in relationship to its impact on the environment. The

impacts of climate change from our dependence on fossil fuel, toxic byproducts from expanding chemical industries, and pollution of land, soil, and water from industrialized agriculture are a significant challenge to a vision of human history in which we expect things to get better and better.

One fascinating story of the complex relationships between culture, plants, and the economy relates to development of sugar cane plantations in the Caribbean. Anthropologist Sidney Mintz documented how our sweet tooth led to development of the slave trade, industrialization, capitalism, and colonization in the Americas.[18] He examined how sugar went from being a luxury good associated with the upper class as a spice and medicine to a regular staple for factory workers. The increased consumption of sugar associated with industrialization provided financial incentives for continuing slavery and colonization projects in the Americas. Mintz's work is not usually described as environmental anthropology, but his careful documentation of the relationship between people and sugar cane clearly demonstrates the importance of certain species of plants in shaping human history.

The question of how humans interact with their environment through hunting and gathering, agriculture, and deforestation is central to understanding how human groups meet their basic needs and continue to survive and develop. By examining these past and present cultural configurations critically and carefully, anthropology provides a valuable perspective from which to understand such environmental questions.

18. [19]

19. [4]

ETHNOECOLOGY

Plants, People, and Culture

Traditionally, anthropologists studied small communities in remote locations rather than urban societies. While much of that work examined rituals, political organizations, and kinship structures, some anthropologists focused on ethnoecology: use and knowledge of plants, animals, and ecosystems by traditional societies. Because those societies depended heavily on the natural world for food, medicine, and building materials, such knowledge was often essential to their survival.

One branch of ethnoecology is ethnobotany, which studies traditional uses of plants for food, construction, dyes, crafts, and medicine. Scientists have estimated that 60 percent of all of the current medicinal drugs in use worldwide were originally derived from plant materials (many are now chemically manufactured). For example, aspirin came from the bark of willow trees and an important muscle relaxant used in open-heart surgery was developed from curare, the poison used on arrows and darts by indigenous groups throughout Central and South America. In light of such discoveries, ethnobotanists traveled to remote corners of the world to document the knowledge of shamans, healers, and traditional medical experts. They have also looked at psychoactive plants and their uses across cultures.

What The People of the Amazon Know That You Don't

This TED talk by ethnobotanist Mark Plotkin describes some important cases of knowledge of medicinal plants learned from indigenous people in the Amazon.

Ethnobotanical work is interdisciplinary, and while some ethnobotanists are anthropologists, many are botanists or come from other disciplines. Anthropologists who study ethnobotany must have a working knowledge of scientific methods for collecting plant specimens and of botanical classification systems and basic ecology. Similarly, archaeologists and paleobotanists study prehistoric people's relationships and use of plants, especially in terms of domestication of plants and animals.

The Kayapó project is a famous ethnobotanical study organized by Darrell Posey and a group of twenty natural and social scientists who examined how the Kayapó people of Brazil understood, managed, and interacted with the various ecosystems they encountered as the region was transformed from a dry savanna-like *Cerrado* to Amazonian rainforest.[20] By documenting Kayapó names for different ecosystems and methods they used to drop seeds and care for certain plants to expand islands of forest in the savanna, the project illustrated the complex ways in which indigenous groups shape the environments in which they live by documenting how the Kayapó cared for, managed, and enhanced forests to make them more productive.

Posey was also an activist who contributed to drafting of the Declaration of Belem, which called for governments and

20. [21]

21. [14]

corporations to respect and justly compensate the intellectual property rights of indigenous groups, especially regarding medicinal plants. He accompanied Kayapó leaders to Washington, D.C., to protest construction of a large dam using funds from the World Bank. Pressure from numerous international groups led to a halt in the dam's construction (plans for the dam have recently been resurrected). Posey's identification of the Kayapó as guardians of the rainforest provided a powerful symbol that resonated with Western ideas of indigeneity and the moral high ground of environmental conservation.

In recent years, some anthropologists have questioned whether the idea of indigenous people having an innate positive connection to the environment—what some call the myth of the ecologically noble savage—is accurate.

POLITICAL ECOLOGY

Questioning Science

In the 1960s, theoretical movements in the social sciences and humanities began to challenge the presumed benefits of modernity and science. These movements were led in part by feminist and post-colonial theorists who saw science as part of a patriarchal system that was complicit in the subjugation of women and colonized people throughout the world. In environmental sciences, this move to question the objectivity of science can be seen in political ecology, a diverse field that includes many anthropologists along with geographers, political scientists, sociologists, and other social scientists. Political ecology's primary message is the importance of examining environmental questions that seem, at first glance, to be strictly scientific (i.e., apolitical). Questions of

cause and effect, for instance, are comprised of political and economic agendas that can be masked by a seemingly neutral language of scientific objectivity. By focusing our attention on the power dynamic in political dimensions of conservation, principally in the developing world, political ecologists illustrate why conservation efforts so often fail to achieve the desired goals.

In an early an influential study of political ecology, Piers Blaikie and others argued that soil erosion was not caused by many of the factors blamed by state governments, including overpopulation, bad farming practices, and environmental stresses. Instead, they found that state policies such as taxes forced farmers into capitalist economic systems that encouraged unsustainable farming practices.[22] From this perspective, soil erosion, which seemed to be primarily a local problem, was actually connected to national politics and needed to be addressed in that larger context. Once attention had been drawn to the relationship between state policies and soil erosion, the solution to the problem could no longer come from simply teaching small-scale farmers better soil conservation techniques. It required eliminating government practices and economic conditions that provided an incentive to use unsustainable farming practices.

Political ecology often focuses on the impacts of governments and corporations in establishing political and economic systems that constrain local behavior and challenges standard narratives regarding environmental destruction and conservation. Learning about political ecology can be difficult for environmentally minded people because it requires them to rethink many of their own positions and the science that supports them.

22. [23]

23. [17]

Revisionist Environmental History

Some of my favorite work in political ecology challenges the causes and effects of tropical deforestation. James Fairhead and Melissa Leach, for example, looked at tropical deforestation in the West African country of Guinea. [24] The state's forestry department and later conservation organizations described the savanna as containing only small fragments of a once extensive tropical forest. Administrators, foresters, and botanists had created forest policies based on the idea that this degradation was caused by local villagers as they cleared and burned forests to create fields for agriculture. Through careful study of historical archives, oral histories, and historical aerial photographs, Fairhead and Leach challenged these narratives. Instead, they argued that the remaining fragments of forest had been planted by local villagers who had gradually planted useful species around their villages, improving the soil for planting and generating other positive ecological changes. Rather than being the cause of the deforestation in areas that was previously forest, the villagers were creating the forest in an area that had previously been savanna through generations of hard work, turning the colonial narrative on its head.

Another fascinating tale comes from William Balee's work in the Amazon. Balee was a friend of Darrell Posey, and their work together got Balee thinking about the extent to which the Amazon rainforest is a product of human productive activities and not entirely natural processes. Balee disagreed with earlier anthropologists who had described how primitive groups were forced to adapt to the constraints imposed by fragile tropical ecosystems, such as declining soil fertility, a lack of plants and animals that provided protein, and other limiting factors that constrained their behavior.

24. [25]

25. [18]

Balee examined a wide variety of ecosystems in the Amazon that seemed to have been created or significantly modified by human activity, including the forest islands of the Kayapó discussed by Posey, babassu palm forests, bamboo forests, Brazil nut forests near Maraba, and liana forests. His conservative estimated was that at least 12 percent of the Amazon, the largest rainforest on the planet, was a product of indigenous intervention. This conclusion challenged two major assumptions made about the rainforest and the people who lived there. First is the notion that indigenous groups were forced to adapt to the harsh environment of the rainforest. Instead, Balee found that they were resource managers who had developed ecosystems to better provide for their needs. Second is the notion that the Amazon was primeval, untouched, and pristine.[26] If we extend this analysis to other regions and ecosystems, it challenges the entire notion of "untouched nature." If the wildest, least populated, and largest rainforest in the world is already highly anthropogenic, or shaped by humans, what can we say about supposed ideas of wilderness in other places?

By recognizing that nature does not exist outside of human activities, we must come to terms with the impacts of our lifestyles on the environment. Some may believe that this cheapens nature, making it less sacred and significant, but understanding the diverse ways in which humans have affected the environment should make us better able to appreciate and evaluate our interactions with it. Instead of seeing nature as outside of human activities, we need to consider how our food production, transportation, and habitation systems affect the environment.

26. [27]

27. [19]

Multispecies Ethnographies

Multispecies ethnographies challenge the centrality of humans in the world. Most of the stories we tell about ourselves and our place in the world and especially stories told by anthropologists revolve around *Homo sapiens*. Increasingly, though, some anthropologists have begun to think about how other species make decisions and exercise a degree of agency that can influence history. For example, Donna Haraway writes about dogs and how the relationship between dogs and humans has evolved over time. She criticizes people who anthropomorphize dogs and challenges her readers to understand dogs on their own terms.[28]

We can also think about the role of bacteria in human evolution and cultural development and remind ourselves that diseases, parasites, and symbiotic gut bacteria that allow us to eat certain kinds of foods have been very influential in shaping human history and cultural development over time. Other works have, for example, re-examined plant and animal domestication from non-human perspectives and explored how forests "think."[30] By carefully considering other species and ecological processes, we decenter our increasingly human-centered focus. Much of the work on multispecies ethnography has been done by feminist anthropologists who have already been at work for decades on similarly decentering male-focused histories of our species.

28. [29]
29. [32]
30. [31]
31. [33]